

**‘THE UNFORTUNATES’
PROSTITUTES TRANSPORTED TO
VAN DIEMEN'S LAND 1822–1843**

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ABSTRACT

Since historians first began to mine the records of the 160,000 men, women and children who were transported to the Australian colonies, the mention of prostitution has titillated researchers and the general public. The prostitute was a highly visible and public figure. Unlike the pickpocket, smuggler, extortionist or forger, each of whom strove to be invisible, the prostitute relied on her visibility to earn a living. However unlike her secretive companions the prostitute's activity was not illegal, yet her visibility made her a convenient scapegoat for many of the fears and failings of contemporary society. In Australia's convict history she is equally visible by virtue of a clear annotation on her convict record.

During the nineteenth century it was commonplace to describe all female convicts as prostitutes, and this usage was adopted by some historians in the mid twentieth century. While the misconception was the legacy of nineteenth-century class, cultural and gendered misunderstandings, twentieth-century historians internalised those nineteenth-century stereotypes. In the 1970s the female convict was reinvented as a hardworking family maker and the label of 'prostitute' was reserved for a few marginalized, debauched incorrigibles. That attempt to exonerate the reputation of the majority, firmly positioned the prostitute as an outcast.

The label of 'prostitute' on the convict records has been accepted as a sign of immorality or 'badness'. We accept that women were questioned about prostitution, as their replies were recorded by the thousands. Yet prostitution was not a criminal offence and women were not transported for being prostitutes. Indeed to be a prostitute was no more indictable than being a laundress or a housemaid. It was the criminal acts which were performed by the prostitute, laundress or housemaid which brought them to Van Diemen's Land.

The glaring question which historians have failed to ask is, 'Why was the question posed, and why was their affirmation recorded?' From their arrest in Britain until their freedom in Van Diemen's Land the label remained fixed on some women's records. To what use was that information put, and how significant was it in determining outcomes for the women? How differently were they treated? The annotation is present on a sufficient number of records to provide answers to some of the questions which have hitherto been overlooked.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJCP	Australian Joint Copying Project
BPP	British Parliamentary Papers
CO	Colonial Office
CON	Convict Department
CSO	Colonial Secretary's Office
GO	Governor's Office
HO	Home Office
ML	Mitchell Library, Sydney
PRO	Public Records Office, London
TAHO	Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office
THRA	Tasmanian Historical Research Association
TP	Tasmanian Papers, Mitchell Library

Each convict is referenced in the following manner:

Record group	Forename	Surname	Police no	Ship
TAHO CON40/1/2	Matilda	Allgood	(154A)	per <i>Emma Eugenia</i> (1842)

The surgeons' journals are referenced for the first time in the following manner:

Record group	Reel no	Ship	Surgeon-Superintendent
PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1/52	3204	<i>Mary Anne</i> (1822)	James Hall

The Tasmanian Papers are referenced in the following manner:

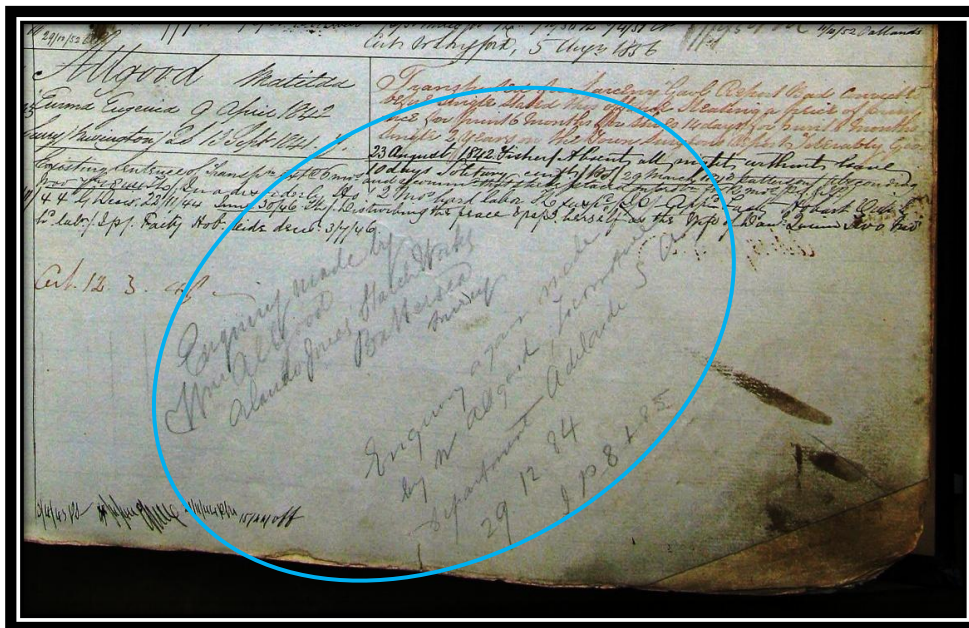
Record group	Reel no	Description of record
ML TP D3	CY1195	Indent for the <i>Mary Anne</i> 1822

The various fields or sections within the records have been italicized to clarify the reference within the text. For example within the CON40 series the category *Surgeon's Report* is italicised. On the description lists the *Trade* category is similarly italicised.

INTRODUCTION: MATILDA ALLGOOD'S STORY

In 1884 an inquiry was received at the Police Department in Hobart, Tasmania from a William Allgood seeking information about Matilda Allgood.¹ It was William's second inquiry; the first he made from the *Orlando Jones Starch Works* in Battersea, this latest was from Adelaide, South Australia.² As a child William had watched his older sister leave the Newington Gaol bound for Woolwich and the female transport *Emma Eugenia*. Matilda's forty mile coach trip took her into a system which forty years later still held her story on file. But while the Convict Department had collected a great deal of information on Matilda, such as her age, height, trade and the names of her brothers and sisters, its interest in Matilda ended when she gained her Certificate of Freedom in 1849.

Figure A: Conduct record for Matilda Allgood per *Emma Eugenia*



Source: TAHO CON40/1/2

¹ TAHO CON40/1/2, Matilda Allgood (154A) per *Emma Eugenia* (1842), image 23. While the exact correspondence from William Allgood has not been located, other inquiries of the same nature can be found at TAHO PD1/1/17. The inquiry was placed on Matilda's CON40 record and advertised in the *Tasmanian Police Gazette*: TAHO POL709/1/20, *Tasmanian Police Gazette* (1885), p. 6, 'Missing Friend'. William's inquiry was in fact for his two sisters. He did not know it but the younger, Mary Ann was transported as Mary Ann Burton so would have been harder to trace. She arrived on the *Royal Admiral* (1842). She too had spent time on the town and is included in this study. TAHO CON40/1/2, Mary Ann Burton (575B) per *Royal Admiral* (1842), image 114.

² The *Orlando Jones Starch Works* was established at Battersea in 1848 and became a major industry for the area.

While convict records were comprehensive, they were tailored to serve the needs of the transportation system. So the Police Department was unable to answer William's inquiry, but it could have told him the names of Matilda's assigned masters and the offences for which she had been punished. Thus the nineteen year old prostitute from Battersea not only lived on in the memory of her brother, but in the convict records of Van Diemen's Land, the penal colony to which she had been dispatched.³

This thesis employs the word 'prostitute' neither in a pejorative sense nor as a moral judgment. It presents as fact that 30.8 per cent of women transported to Van Diemen's Land from Britain and Ireland during the early nineteenth century had the words 'prostitute', 'on the town', or 'unfortunate' written on their records.⁴ The figure is an average taken from forty five ships in which the rate of usage of these terms varied from a low of 11 per cent to a high of 72 per cent.⁵ Percentages are calculated from information placed on the women's records. Variations on different ships may reflect differing processes of record creation and the framing of any question concerning the women's past history. Some entries are based on information forwarded from British prisons through the gaol reports. Others are through the judgements made by the surgeon-superintendent during the voyage. A final source is via statements made by the women who were interrogated on arrival in the colony. In undertaking such a task I heed Edward Higgs' warning and refrain from building elaborate mansions on shifting archival sands.⁶ A great deal of this thesis is an exercise in textual archaeology, and in that sense it is the shifting sands themselves which I wish to explore.

For the purposes of this study, unless specifically examining the nuances of each of the three terms as in chapter two, I intend to use the word 'prostitute' to refer to women who have one or more of the three terms which were employed to denote prostitution displayed on their records. As will be shown, the three terms were used interchangeably.⁷ The research is limited to females because they alone carried the

³ The name Van Diemen's Land was later changed to Tasmania.

⁴ Appendix A: Women identified as prostitutes who arrived in Van Diemen's Land 1822-1843.

⁵ The identification rate of women labelled as prostitutes ranged from 11 per cent on the *Mexborough* (1841) to 72 per cent of women on the *Mermaid* (1828).

⁶ Edward Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 23 (Spring, 1987), p. 76 online:

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/stable/pdfplus/4288748.pdf?acceptTC=true> (2 December 2011).

⁷ See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the three terms.

identification on their records. In this thesis the term Britain will be used to refer to England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.⁸

During the nineteenth century it was commonplace to describe all female convicts as prostitutes, and this usage was adopted by some historians in the mid twentieth century. The practice provoked a strong backlash in the 1970s and Michael Sturma explained the genesis of the misappropriation of the term as the gap between working-class behaviour and mores, and upper middle-class expectations and ignorance.⁹ While this misconception is the legacy of nineteenth-century class, cultural and gendered misunderstandings, twentieth-century historians have internalised those early stereotypes. So although the literature on colonial prostitution is sparse, the question of prostitution has been a dominant theme in the historiography of the female convict.¹⁰

In general, historians have been critical of trying to quantify the number of transported prostitutes, suspecting wider motives behind such pursuits.¹¹ Particular concern has been expressed over the morally loaded context within which some earlier attempts at quantification were conducted. The corollary has been to deny that terms which signified prostitution were accurate for more than a minority of convict women, thereby limiting the practice to a few marginalized, debauched incorrigibles. Yet those attempts to exonerate the reputation of the majority have had questionable success. Indeed, there is a danger that in positioning the prostitute as an outcast in an attempt to rescue the majority of colonial women, historians have heightened the stigma associated with the term. While conscious of the risks inherent in venturing into a highly contested realm, this thesis recognizes that some women earned a living through prostitution. Others may wish to place a value judgment on that, but it is not the aim of this thesis. The study rejects both the sentimentalising of the female convict and the image of the prostitute as

⁸ This follows Deborah Oxley's practice in Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The forced migration of women to Australia* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 33.

⁹ Michael Sturma, 'Eye of the Beholder: The Stereotype of Women Convicts 1788-1852', *Labour History*, no. 34 (May, 1978), p. 10.

¹⁰ For works on colonial prostitution see: Kay Daniels, 'Prostitution in Tasmania during the transition from penal settlement to "civilized" society', in Kay Daniels (ed.), *So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History* (Sydney, 1984); Ray Evans, "'Soiled Doves" Prostitution in colonial Queensland', in Daniels (ed.), *So Much Hard Work*, pp. 127-161; Kay Daniels, *Convict Women* (Crow's Nest, 1998), pp. 184-213; Raelene Frances, *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution* (Sydney, 2007); Roberta Perkins, *Working Girls: Prostitutes, their life and social control* (Canberra, 1991).

¹¹ Daniels, 'Prostitution in Tasmania', pp. 25-28.

either inherently wicked or a 'soiled dove'. Such generalisations have no place in objective historical scholarship.¹²

Since historians first began to mine the records of those 160,000 men, women and children transported to the Australian colonies, the spectre of prostitution has titillated researchers and the general public.¹³ The prostitute was a highly visible and public figure. Unlike the pickpocket, smuggler, extortionist or forger, all of whom strove to be invisible and clandestine, the prostitute relied on her visibility to earn a living. However unlike her secretive companions the prostitute's activity was not illegal, yet her visibility made her a convenient scapegoat for many of the fears and failings of contemporary society. In Australia's convict history she is equally visible by virtue of a clear annotation on her convict record.

Key questions which this thesis will address are: who labelled women as prostitutes? Why was that information collected by the state, and how was it collected? Is there evidence that the women so labelled were prostitutes? If the evidence suggests that they were, is it possible to determine why they chose this means of obtaining an income? How different were those identified as prostitutes from other women, and were they treated differently while under sentence? Finally, how differently did they experience transportation and life post servitude?

The first occasion on which women could have been identified on their records as prostitutes was during their arrest for the crime which would ultimately bring them to Van Diemen's Land. The constable or members of the watch may have noted the detail, either from the women's own admission or their knowledge of the prisoner. Such knowledge was frequently repeated during their trial which then became part of the trial report. Once a guilty verdict was passed and women were detained in gaol prior to transportation, their trade may have been recorded as 'prostitute' by the gaoler. Arrival at the convict transport prompted another interrogation whereby a clerk who prepared an indent may have questioned the women and recorded that fact. Alternatively the

¹² 'Soiled dove' is a term used by Ray Evans to demonstrate how some have portrayed the prostitute: Evans, "'Soiled Doves'" in Daniels, *So Much Hard Work*, pp. 127-161.

¹³ According to Bateson, 160,023 prisoners were transported to the Australian colonies during the eighty years of transportation from Britain and its colonies: Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships 1787-1868* (Artarmon [New South Wales], 1974), p. 3.

surgeon-superintendent could have received such information from the women during the voyage, or made the judgement himself based on observations of his patient and her past history. The final opportunity for extracting the information was on arrival when women were questioned by colonial officials, in the knowledge that their background information was already known to their interrogators.¹⁴ This prior knowledge was the sum of all the previous information gathering exercises.

It is accepted that women were questioned about prostitution, as their replies were recorded by the thousands. But the glaring question which historians have failed to ask is, 'why was the question posed in the first place?' This fundamental question has dictated the direction of this research. Physical characteristics were collected as a means of identification and surveillance. Marital status was sought to discourage bigamous marriages. Trade and skills were needed for the allocation of convict labour. But why was a question posed about prostitution? Prostitution was not a criminal offence and women were not transported for being prostitutes. Indeed to be a prostitute was no more indictable than being a laundress or a housemaid. It was the criminal acts for which prostitutes, laundresses and housemaids were convicted, that brought them to Van Diemen's Land. Deborah Oxley explained that its presence in the convict records has been accepted as a sign of immorality or 'badness'.¹⁵ Officials who recorded it, or later read of it, may have judged it so.

There appeared to have been a systematic effort to ensure that prostitutes arriving in Van Diemen's Land were afforded no anonymity. This prompts the second major question of the thesis: how significant was that label in determining outcomes for the women? In other words, how was that information used? Historians have been correct to claim that we can never know the exact numbers of transported prostitutes, but the fact remains that enough were so identified to enable an exploration of their colonial lives.

The task of answering these questions is dependent upon the availability of sources. It has therefore been necessary to use several different data sets for different chapters to

¹⁴ *British Parliamentary Papers. Report from the Select Committee on Transportation together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index. Crime and Punishment – Transportation 2* (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), pp. 281-281, evidence of Lieutenant George Arthur.

¹⁵ Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p.7.

extract the necessary statistical information. The basic data set is taken from the female conduct records (CON40 series) and comprises women from forty five ships who arrived in Van Diemen's Land from Britain between 1822 when the first mention of 'prostitute' or 'on the town' or 'unfortunate' appeared in the conduct records, until the arrival of the *Woodbridge* in 1843. In order to put a limit on the study, information was not collected for ships arriving in the probation period which for women spanned the years 1844 to 1853. I have been guided by the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO) previously the Archives Office of Tasmania (AOT) in their nomination of the *Woodbridge* in December 1843 as the last female ship to enter the assignment period. An advantage of this data set is that it consists of records for unique individuals, unlike prison registers which routinely record multiple arrests for the same women and which then have to be subsequently linked.

CON40 records were chosen to provide the basic information for this research because every woman who arrived in the colony had such a record. Not all ships have surviving indents although they have been invaluable as a supplementary source of data to further identify women labelled as prostitutes and expand on their family and criminal background.¹⁶ Indents have been located for twenty five of the ships in this study. Seven ships possess gaol lists or gaol returns and the subsequent ship manifests which centralised that gaol data. The surgeons' journals which provide medical information on many of the women are available for forty three ships.¹⁷ In total, 1,779 women out of 5,778 were found to have been described as a prostitute in one or more of these record groups. Other records which have been used to augment the stories of the 1,779 women are description lists which were compiled on arrival, appropriation lists which were used to allocate their labour, the lists of possessions which convict women brought with them, convict musters, registers of births, deaths and marriages, inquests of deaths, evidence from colonial inquiries, records of rescue and benevolent societies, and newspaper articles.

While this thesis employs a statistical approach, percentages represent individual stories. A strong focus has thus been given to case studies which could be said to

¹⁶ Indents for ships can be found at TAHO CON15 Indents of female convicts 1831-1853, some of which are digitised. Others can be found on various microfilm reels of the Tasmanian Papers (TP).

¹⁷ Gaol lists can be found in the TP, for example those for the *Jane* are in TP D4 CY 1196. Surgeons' journals can be found at PRO AJCP Adm. 101.

provide detailed life course histories and human evidence of the themes emerging from the statistical data. Matilda Allgood who had left her family in Battersea, possessed a colonial record which forty years later revealed her brother's quest, but also revealed that the Convict Department had lost track of Matilda. Yet her details were still being documented by other departments and memorialised by her family. Matilda's story unfolded through the process of sourcing information from many record groups.¹⁸ Such strategies which are used by family historians were employed in this study to follow the women in their ongoing relationship with the state as they attempted to establish a life in the colony post servitude.

During the years 1822 until 1843 Britain was described as 'a country humming with prosperity, innovation and intellectual activity.'¹⁹ The excesses of the Regency period were giving way to the conservatism of the Victorian era and the rise to prominence of middle-class values, although the strict conventions of the late Victorian period were yet to be realised. More significantly for this study it was not the Britain of the Contagious Diseases Acts.²⁰ Women identified as prostitutes were not yet coerced into brutal physical examinations nor enforced incarceration in Lock Hospitals. While prostitution was not universally accepted, its practitioners were not depicted as a feared pestilence which stalked the streets. All too often historians have interpreted the colonial prostitute through the lens of Victorian morality and such assumptions may have distorted the picture of women labelled as prostitutes. Whilst this study does at times draw upon the historiography of prostitution in earlier and later periods, it has done so merely to place the finding of this study within a wider historical context.

Chapter one will survey the literature on female convict transportation and prostitution. The historiography of the eighteenth and nineteenth century had a powerful and enduring influence on twentieth-century historians, so chapter one also looks at the origins of that legacy. Chapter two offers an examination of the record groups which

¹⁸ The initial inquiry into Matilda's whereabouts which was placed onto on her CON40 record was found to be from her brother who was named on her indent although not on her CON40 record. The British census confirmed that he was a 33 year old starcher working at the *Orlando Jones Starch Factory*, Battersea in 1870. Matilda's colonial offences mentioned that she had illegally passed herself off as the wife of Daniel Quinn. Permission to marry registers showed that she later married Quinn and birth registers showed the birth of three children. Matilda's inquest described the final weeks before her death.

¹⁹ Ben Wilson, *Decency and Disorder: The Age of Cant 1789-1837* (London, 2007), p. 315.

²⁰ The first Contagious Diseases Act was passed in 1864.

identified women as prostitutes. Having established that the three labels of 'prostitute', 'on the town' and 'unfortunate' set the parameters of this study, it is important to investigate what the terms appear to represent. This chapter also addresses the question of whether or not the women so described really were prostitutes and highlights the difficulties inherent in reading these sources. The chapter concludes with a profile of the women who were categorized in that way.

The conditions and behaviours which drew women into prostitution are explored in chapter three in an attempt to answer the question of why women became prostitutes. This process places the observations of nineteenth-century commentators such as James Miller, William Logan, Henry Mayhew, Bracebridge Hemyng and William Tait against the evidence drawn from the convict records. While it is true that the ways in which convict women viewed the world, often 'remain invisible, disguised by ... Dickensian tropes',²¹ much can nevertheless be gleaned by interrogating the evidence supplied by the women's own statements, and by qualitative and quantitative exercises in reading between the lines of information assembled to regulate their lives.

Prostitution was not only a survival strategy for women, but in most cases it created the conditions for their criminality and transportation. Chapter four examines the voyage to Van Diemen's Land, particularly the shipboard routine and activities, through a close reading of the surgeons' journals. This chapter considers any differences in the treatment of women who were identified as prostitutes and those who were not, and begins to assess the significance of the label. The voyage continues in chapter five but with a focus on the health and well-being of the women. It seeks any evidence of differing medical treatment offered to the two groups of women.

Once women arrived in the colony they were re-questioned to assess their labour potential and assigned accordingly. Chapter six looks at that process for women whose previous trade had been recorded as 'prostitute', although they were asked to name other work experiences. It examines how authorities assigned those women. Chapter seven continues to look at patterns of assignment with emphasis on areas which have received scant attention in the past, such as the relationship between mistress and

²¹ Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, 'The search for the invisible man', in Lucy Frost and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart (eds.), *Chain letters: Narrating convict lives* (South Carlton, 2001), p. 63.

assigned servant, leisure time during assignment, and the care of settlers' children, through the experience of women who were identified as prostitutes. Again these chapters attempt to discern whether the label held any practical implications for the treatment of female convicts.

The final chapter bridges both the women's time under sentence and their freedom. The core question is whether servitude and the experience of assignment produced a wider range of choices for these women than would have been available in Britain. A significant component of this final chapter is a study of prostitution within the colony and the likelihood of women returning to prostitution as a post servitude survival strategy.

CHAPTER 1: HOW IS PROSTITUTION DEFINED?

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Introduction: a cautionary tale

Picture to yourselves the life of a prostitute, lost to shame, in the streets; abandoned by her seducer, and her soul harrowed by remorse for her fall from innocence, and the infamy of her abject state; her tender frame shrunk with the ceaseless gnawings of hunger; houseless, friendless and unpitied! ... behold this metamorphosed wretch, almost consumed by disease, crawling into some dismal hovel to yield up her life of pain and sorrow, without a creature to administer the *last* sad office of friendship. No father nor mother near to shed the hallowed tear of sympathetic commiseration! her undutiful behaviour most likely has sent them both to an untimely grave.¹

When Surgeon-Superintendent Thomas Reid uttered those cautionary words to the women aboard the *Morley* he expounded upon a familiar theme.² Nineteenth-century observers were comfortable with pronouncements about the prostitute and assured of their qualification to speak for and about her. The various images of the prostitute as a seductress, Magdalen, innocent victim, wretched outcast or carrier of disease, have endured in the historiography of the convict era. They are recognisable from the writings of men with religious, medical and journalistic credentials who were motivated by evangelical, scientific or financial aspirations. Self-righteous eyes focussed on the

¹ Thomas Reid, *Two Voyages to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, With a Description of the Present Condition of that Interesting Colony: including Facts and Observations relative to the State and Management of Convicts of both Sexes also Reflections on Seduction and its General Consequences* (London, 1822), p. 114, online:

<http://archive.org/stream/twovoyagestonew00reidgoog#page/n30/mode/2up> (13 October 2009).

² The *Morley* (1820) is excluded from this study as it arrived before the systematic collection of data on prostitution. I have made reference to Thomas Reid's diary because the conditions and attitudes which he described were typical of the period.

prostitute and in her stories they saw reflected the worst aspects of their society. Although prostitution itself was not a crime, some female convicts who were banished from Britain to Van Diemen's Land in the early nineteenth century were identified as prostitutes. It is therefore helpful to try to understand the way in which the women were depicted by those who rejected them.

Nineteenth-century historiography

In 1842 the Reverend Dr. Ralph Wardlaw responded to

an earnest request, that you would deliver a lecture, or lectures, on a subject so truly important, anticipating, from your honoured labours heretofore, the most beneficial and gratifying results, which accompanied by the divine blessing, would, we believe, contribute to bring the public mind into a right position respecting the great evil your Memorialists deprecate, – and which might ultimately unite all truly patriotic and christian men, and lead to active and strenuous co-operation for the prevention and cure of the prevailing immorality, and so advance the cause of Christ's kingdom.³

His memorialists were thirty eight ministers of the gospel, to whose entreaties were added those of 1,100 fellow citizens of all religious persuasions. They collectively viewed with unfeigned alarm and regret the increase in female prostitution in Glasgow. Dr Wardlaw acceded to their wishes and delivered three lectures in Glasgow which he repeated in Edinburgh. He addressed exclusively male audiences of approved medical and clerical gentlemen and then published his lectures. Wardlaw assured his readers that only a sense of duty, and the knowledge that he was securely armed with the weapons of divine Christianity, patriotism, duty to society and the approbation of his peers, had compelled him to discuss the subject. What was missing from his declaration was an acknowledgement that such crusades may have been more than a philanthropic duty to expose a moral evil and suggest its cure. Judith Walkowitz suggested that for some it may have been a personal exposure to sexual temptation and a test of their moral fibre.⁴

³ Reverend Ralph Wardlaw, *Lectures on Female Prostitution: Its Nature, Extent, Effects, Guilt, Causes, and Remedy* (Glasgow, 1843), p. vi, online: <http://www.google.com.au/books?id=-sZQcDdno7QC>.

⁴ Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, class, and the state* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 33.

In that quest Wardlaw was joined by temperance and moral reformers such as city missionary William Logan, the secretary of the London Society for the Protection of Young Females James Beard Talbot, and evangelical physicians like Michael Ryan and William Tait.⁵ All were quick to air their credentials, usually on the title pages of their publications, and to stress the reluctance with which they embarked upon such unpalatable research.⁶ In books, novels, lectures, pamphlets and manifestos they followed a prescribed format which outlined the nature and extent of prostitution, its causes, effects and the means of prevention, mitigation and removal.⁷

Such research was facilitated by the growing interest in statistical analysis during the 1820s and 30s. Statistical societies were formed in London and the provinces to conduct empirical surveys and collect standardised data on aspects of social life such as health, housing and crime.⁸ Surveys were conducted by police departments, rescue societies and charitable institutions, and tables and charts displayed the vital figures and statistics.⁹ The task of the researcher who wished to tackle such a complex issue was outlined:

it will be necessary that we should take as comprehensive a view of the subject as possible, collecting a large and multifarious body of facts, and examining the matter from almost every conceivable point of view.¹⁰

⁵ William Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation, of Female Prostitution in London, Leeds, and Rochdale, and Especially in the City of Glasgow; with Remarks on the Cause, Extent, Results, and Remedy of the Evil* (Glasgow, 1843 [Microfiche at the National Library of Australia: Goldsmiths Kress Library of Economic Literature, Printed books 1801-1850]); James Beard Talbot, *The Miseries of Prostitution* (Harvard, 2012 [London, 1844]); Michael Ryan, *Prostitution in London with a comparative view of that of Paris and New York, with an account of the nature and treatment of the various diseases, caused by the abuses of the reproductive function* (London, 1839), online: <http://books.google.com.au/books?id=zHsEAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA88&lpg=PA88&dq=michael+ryan+prostitution+in+london&source=bl&ots=RfjKZfCTbO&sig=TosL8lHk3VsJnBzpOWm4XxPs8m0&hl=en&sa=X&ei=k1A9UbexD8aQiQe-7YHwCA&ved=0CEYQ6AEwBA> (9 June 2011); William Tait, *Magdalenism, An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1840 [re-issued 1842]), online: <http://www.google.com.au/books?id=7vMDAAAAQAAJ>.

⁶ Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1988), p. 145.

⁷ While this work took place in Britain, Alexandre Jean Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet was surveying the behaviour of prostitutes in Paris where he published his findings in 1837.

⁸ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 104.

⁹ Michael Ryan produced a survey in London using information from the secretary of the London Rescue Society, James Beard Talbot; William Tait who was chief surgeon at the Edinburgh Lock Hospital conducted a similar survey in Edinburgh in 1840, after which he produced *Magdalenism. An Inquiry*, from his personal observations.

¹⁰ Henry Mayhew and Bracebridge Hemyng, 'The Prostitute Class Generally', in Henry Mayhew (ed.), *London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those That Will*

In the nineteenth century the prostitute became a special object of inquiry.¹¹ A combination of parliamentary reports, state legislation, police statistics, medical investigations, letters and articles in newspapers, evangelical manifestos, religious sermons, novels, poems, prints, and paintings, served to create certain attitudes to, and images of, the prostitute. The subject touched a nerve which seemed to be sharply felt within unexpected fields of study. Experts in politics, the sciences, philosophy, religion, and medicine claimed that they possessed the appropriate qualifications to explain and overcome what was seen as a serious problem. Regardless of their disciplinary background, all commentators implicitly or explicitly pitted middle-class virtue against working-class moral failings. Unbridled female sexuality was seen as symptomatic of the undisciplined nature of working-class life and prostitution as a form of disruptive sexual behaviour manifest more widely in common-law marriage and concubinage.¹²

While elements of each of the images or mythologies which surround the prostitute can be found from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, some depictions are more prominent in specific periods. Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth century the figure of the prostitute was frequently associated with a breach of public order. The prostitute was yet another colourful addition to the street life and culture of many towns and was viewed as such.¹³ In the late seventeenth century, groups such as the London Society for the Reformation of Manners employed strategies to suppress street-walkers and bawdy houses.¹⁴ An act of 1737 voiced the need 'to apprehend all Nightwalkers, Malefactors, Rogues, Vagabonds, and all disorderly Persons whom they shall find disturbing the Publick Peace, or shall have just cause to suspect of any evil Designs'.¹⁵ The removal of prostitutes was linked with a desire for peace, stability and public order.¹⁶ It may also have coincided with an image of what

Work, Those That Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work, vol. 4 (London, 1967 [1860-1861]), p. 36.

¹¹ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 97.

¹² Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 35.

¹³ Robert D Storch, 'Police Control of Street Prostitution in Victorian London: a Study in the Contexts of Police Action', in David H Bayley (ed.), *Police and Society* (London, 1977), p. 50; Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London: Prostitution and Control in the Metropolis, 1730-1830* (Harlow, 1999), pp. 43-44.

¹⁴ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, pp. 86-87.

¹⁵ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 90.

¹⁶ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 177.

Tony Henderson identified as the ‘vile harlot’ or ‘vicious streetwalking whores’, lying in wait for unwary males.¹⁷

Stronger evidence exists however for the emergence in the late eighteenth century of the prostitute as an innocent victim.¹⁸ She was portrayed as a tragic figure on a downward trajectory. Her degeneration entailed a loss of respectability and family networks, seduction, deception and her ultimate demise. Both images are evident in the lectures delivered to female prisoners by Thomas Reid. He regaled his charges with tales of seduction, rejection, and the physical and mental suffering of a gullible young woman, who also confusingly exhibited a calculating and underlying desire to prey on and destroy men.¹⁹ According to Henderson the depiction of the ‘victim’ coincided with the adoption of the terms ‘misfortunate’ or ‘unfortunate’ to describe a prostitute.²⁰ This term can be found in the convict records between the years of 1826 and 1835.²¹ By the 1770s the image of the prostitute as a victim was firmly entrenched.²² The Westmoreland Lock Hospital in Ireland refused to admit men suffering from venereal disease, blaming the infection on their ‘indulgence in vicious propensities’.²³ Prostitutes were admitted and were recognisably Thomas Reid’s melancholy victims of seduction, cast off by parents for the one fatal error, and turning to prostitution as their only means of support. Yet as Henderson showed, the image was not lacking a taint of malevolence and contagion in the early period, but the scales were tipped to favour the poor Magdalen.

From the 1850s onwards the innocent prostitute was joined by a more demonic and threatening figure. William Acton had referred to the ‘sanitary aspects’ of prostitution and as the nervous middle classes witnessed the contagion and pollution of overcrowded cities, the street prostitute featured prominently in that landscape. She

¹⁷ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 189.

¹⁸ Peter Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis containing a detail of the Various Crimes and Misdemeanors by which public and Private Property and Security are, at present injured and endangered: and Suggesting Remedies for their Prevention* (London, 1806), pp. 336-337, online: http://books.google.com.au/books?pg=PA1&dq=Patrick+Colquhoun&id=l6kqAAAAMAAJ&as_brr=1 (13 June 2010).

¹⁹ Reid, *Two Voyages*, pp. 378-381.

²⁰ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 189.

²¹ See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the term ‘unfortunate’.

²² Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 186.

²³ Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society, 1800-1940* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 131, citing the Report of the Select Committee on the Irish Miscellaneous Estimates, HC. 1829 (342), iv, 127, p. 172.

became increasingly associated with disease and decay, not only of the human body but of the body politic – its morals and institutions. Prostitutes were recognised as a source of that disease, contamination and pollution. No longer was the prostitute a rowdy, embarrassing nuisance, nor an essentially pitiable creature, but she had now become a serious danger to society. Venereal disease became symbolic of the destruction which a prostitute could wreak on society. Her devastation was even linked to imperial decline.²⁴ Concern for society replaced the concern for the prostitute as a victim. In describing the extent to which prostitution had invaded society, James Miller professor of surgery at Edinburgh University, counted the costs in ‘debauchery, disease and death to individuals – of degradation and danger to the community at large’.²⁵ The prostitute became an intellectual and scientific source of disquiet and study, and pronouncements on the issue were usually embroiled in wider social debates.²⁶

Not surprisingly the subject continued to occupy the public conscience in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the 1850s Dr. William Acton paused from gynaecological practice to address the plight of the prostitute.²⁷ His work, replete with charts and tables was reissued to support the Contagious Diseases Legislation of the 1860s. The effect of that legislation was to codify the image of the prostitute as a wretched outcast; a woman who inhabited the dark and dank tunnels of a fetid metropolis – furtive, predatory and damned – to be feared and controlled. James Miller described the threat of ‘a multitudinous amazonian army the devil keeps in constant field service, for advancing his own ends. The stones seem alive with lust, and the very atmosphere is tainted’.²⁸ While these developments occurred almost a decade after transportation for women had ceased, they later became powerfully influential in shaping attitudes towards transported women. In this sense the spectre of the prostitute

²⁴ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 94.

²⁵ James Miller, *Prostitution Considered in Relation to Its Cause and Cure* (Edinburgh 1859 [Original in the British Library, reproduced as part of the Nineteenth Century Microfiche Programme]), p. 5.

²⁶ Kirsty Reid, ‘Work, Sexuality and Resistance; The Convict Women of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839’, A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh (1995), p. 100.

²⁷ William Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects, In London and other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils* (London, 1857), online: <http://books.google.com.au/books?id=XJsrHfQqL5sC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> (17 October 2009).

²⁸ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, p. 5.

has served as a disciplinary weapon in a wider campaign to force women to conform, or as a warning to those who would contemplate abandoning the more socially sanctioned path.

The prostitute's plight was not the exclusive property of the evangelical or medical reformer but was also revealed through interviews, case studies, and 'true confessions'. Henry Mayhew and Bracebridge Hemyng interviewed prostitutes and presented them to a voracious reading public.²⁹ The illusion of authenticity was fabricated through the use of slang and dialectic speech to represent the words of their subjects.³⁰ Accompanying these case studies were the statistics and tables much favoured by the religious and medical experts but used instead to validate sensational anecdotes for a voyeuristic public. And while investigators were prepared to 'descend' into that world, they nevertheless took with them their middle-class prejudices. They drew on the authority of law and medicine to give authenticity to mere social observation.³¹ Such articles served as entertainment and boosted newspaper circulation.³² When journalist James Greenwood identified what he considered to be *The Seven Curses of London*, he included 'Fallen Women' as the fourth curse.³³ In the eighteenth century the prostitute also received occasional notoriety within sensational literature such as John Cleland's novel *Fanny Hill or Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*.³⁴ Such authors appropriated the prostitute for their own ends whether to sell newspapers, further a career, swell a congregation or discipline the working class.

The figure of the prostitute also served a useful purpose at the end of the nineteenth century. Her image as a victim was reinforced with the passing of the Contagious Diseases Acts. One feature of the legislation was the sanctioning of enforced physical examination and detention in Lock Hospitals for women who were identified as

²⁹ Bracebridge Hemyng was a contributor to: Henry Mayhew (ed.), *London Labour and the London Poor*.

³⁰ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 151.

³¹ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, pp. 154-155.

³² Henry Mayhew produced articles for the *Morning Chronicle* prior to publishing *London Labour and the London Poor*.

³³ James Greenwood was a journalist who ventured into the slum areas of London as did Mayhew. Greenwood called himself 'The Amateur Casual' because of his ability to pass himself off as one of the crowd. He published *The Seven Curses of London* (Cambridge, 1869), online: <http://books.google.com.au/books?id=dO2UEHnMC9oC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> (21 August 2010).

³⁴ John Cleland, *Fanny Hill or Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (London: Penguin Books undated, Godfrey Cave Edition [1748]).

prostitutes and suspected of carrying venereal disease. Reaction against that legislation became part of a political and legal campaign for women's rights.³⁵

Historiography of the colonial period

Lynda Nead identified the dilemma confronting modern historians who attempt to solicit the prostitute in words. She acknowledged the word 'prostitute' to be the broadest and most complex term within the categorization of female behaviour during the nineteenth century.³⁶ Nead argued that definitions of and attitudes towards prostitutes were multiple, fragmented and frequently contradictory.³⁷ Perhaps for that very reason the figure of the prostitute has hovered in the shadows of colonial historiography, rarely coming to the forefront. She is however often used as a trope to calibrate a scale against which others could be declared good/bad, worthy/worthless. Hence discussions of the prostitute or of prostitution have remained peripheral issues in the otherwise impressive historiography of female convicts published since the 1970s. The transported prostitute is still viewed as 'the other', part of a minority, one step removed from the general female convict experience.

The discipline of history has never operated in a vacuum and the approach of its practitioners cannot fail to reflect their social, political and cultural environment, or indeed their challenges to that environment. The revelation that women were agents in their own right who acted independently of their male counterparts has shaped the way in which history has been written since the mid twentieth century, and this is particularly the case with social history. This shift was modelled on the works of historians such as Edward P Thompson who was concerned with the lives of ordinary working people – the previously invisible proletariat.³⁸ Marilyn Lake placed this within a feminist discourse where 'Part of the ongoing feminist project has been not simply to

³⁵ Josephine Butler campaigned to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts. For work on Josephine Butler see: Jenny Dagers and Diana Neal (eds.), *Sex, gender and religion: Josephine Butler revisited* (New York, c2006); Rebecca Styler, *Literary Theology by Women Writers of the nineteenth century* (Surrey, 2012), particularly chapter 6, 'Josephine Butler's Liberation Theology', online: [http://reader.ebilib.com.au.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/\(S\(mhamu5flvzz4cfxjwmxb3sj0\)\)/Reader.aspx?p=587874&o=170&u=D4CG5zOd6fEUjcklJHJr5w%3d%3d&t=1353801680&h=3FB436D508E75F05BA85F02E88E018814D08EEEF&s=7242049&ut=554&pg=1&r=img&c=-1&pat=n](http://reader.ebilib.com.au.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/(S(mhamu5flvzz4cfxjwmxb3sj0))/Reader.aspx?p=587874&o=170&u=D4CG5zOd6fEUjcklJHJr5w%3d%3d&t=1353801680&h=3FB436D508E75F05BA85F02E88E018814D08EEEF&s=7242049&ut=554&pg=1&r=img&c=-1&pat=n) (18 June 2012).

³⁶ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 91.

³⁷ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 91.

³⁸ Edward Palmer Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1968).

insert women into History, but to establish women's status, their credentials as human subjects, capable of action, initiative, purpose.'³⁹

Other methodological changes have coincided with the new attention to women's stories. Quantitative analysis had captivated the Victorians as they strove to explain and remove the threats to their ordered world. It was resurrected as a tool of historical inquiry in the 1950s and 1960s. Early quantitative explorations of female convicts in general, and those labelled as prostitutes in particular, were comparatively crude, reproducing many of the discourses that had coloured previous nineteenth-century analysis.⁴⁰

Statistical analysis gave Lloyd Robson evidence for the existence of a criminal class and among its members was the female convict prostitute.⁴¹ In 1963 he pre-empted the publication of his book *Convict Settlers*, by suggesting that 'probably at least one woman in five was a prostitute', and that they were an indifferent group of settlers.⁴² And in spite of warning that 'exasperated officials, who perhaps had never had to deal with fallen women *en masse*, should not be regarded as anything but subjective', his choice of supporting case studies bore alarming similarities to those of Henry Mayhew a century earlier.⁴³ Robson made an example of Phillis Perry who was listed as a domestic servant, but had stated, 'I have never been brought up to housework.'⁴⁴ Robson described her as a prostitute, but with the clear inference that prostitution equated to immorality and worthlessness; to Robson her lack of domestic skills confirmed the fact. Phillis was indeed identified in her indent as a prostitute but Robson failed to mention that she was also trained as a nailer. Her lack of domestic skills was the result of training in an alternative trade.⁴⁵ Perhaps Robson had read the minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee on Transportation wherein Peter Murdock expressed

³⁹ Marilyn Lake, 'Convict Women as Objects of Male Vision: An Historiographical Review', *Bulletin of the Centre for Tasmanian Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1988), p. 43.

⁴⁰ Lloyd Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia: An Enquiry into the Origins and character of the Convicts transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1787-1852* (Melbourne, 1976); A G L Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and other parts of the British Empire* (Melbourne, 1981).

⁴¹ Robson, *Convict Settlers of Australia*, pp. 80-85.

⁴² Lloyd Robson, 'The Origin of the Women Convicts Sent to Australia, 1787-1852', *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 11, no. 41 (1963), pp. 47-51.

⁴³ Robson, *Convict Settlers of Australia*, p. 76.

⁴⁴ TAHO CON40/1/7, Phillis Perry (68P) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829) image 196; ML TP 24 CY 1276, Indent for the *Lady of the Lake*.

⁴⁵ Robson, *Convict Settlers of Australia*, p. 84.

his disapproval of a female convict servant who said she was a nailer. Murdock stated that he had never before heard of such a thing.⁴⁶ Thus mid twentieth-century historians erred in two fundamental ways. Not only did they relegate all female convicts to the category of prostitute, but they also assumed that all prostitutes were social deviants. Lip service was occasionally paid to the lack of choices and pitiful plight of ‘fallen women’, again an echo of nineteenth-century moralists, but there was a failure to consider that perhaps the categorisation of ‘prostitute’ was unsustainable.

As Michael Sturma noted, Robson and A G L Shaw concurred with Manning Clark and all three were in agreement with Henry Mayhew, Bracebridge Hemyng, Patrick Colquhoun, Henry Fielding and the Select Committee on Transportation in identifying female convicts, ‘with scarcely an exception’ as, ‘drunken and abandoned prostitutes’.⁴⁷ Although Shaw, Robson and Manning Clark argued that analysis of convict records provided support for the existence of a criminal class, Brian Fletcher pointed out that their interpretation did not penetrate the popular mind to the extent that might have been anticipated. Fletcher believed that the romantic, idealised view of convicts as ‘more sinned against than sinning’ endured.⁴⁸ While this may be the case for male convicts it is less clear that popular perceptions of female convicts were so benign.

Quantitative methods became more sophisticated with the advent of computerised relational databases. This innovation was best demonstrated in the Australian context through the work of Deborah Oxley and Kirsty Reid.⁴⁹ Case studies are also effective tools with which to illuminate the lives of women and Kay Daniels, Babette Smith,

⁴⁶ *British Parliamentary Papers. Reports from Select Committees on Transportation with Minutes of Evidence Proceedings, appendices and indices, Crime and Punishment – Transportation*, 3 (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 118, evidence of Peter Murdock Esquire. The alternative spelling of ‘Murdock’ is used in Van Diemen's Land records.

⁴⁷ Michael Sturma, ‘Eye of the Beholder: The Stereotype of Women Convicts 1788-1852’, *Labour History*, no. 34 (1978), p. 5; see also *British Parliamentary Papers. Report from the Select Committee on Transportation together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index. Crime and Punishment – Transportation* 2, (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 38, evidence of James Mudie Esquire; C M H Clark, *A History of Australia 1 From the Earliest Times to the Age of Macquarie* (Melbourne, 1977).

⁴⁸ Brian Fletcher, ‘Australia’s Convict Origins: Myth and History’, *History Today*, vol. 42, no. 10 (1992), p. 3, online version: <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=50498807-b3fa-4fa5-8ab7-fd5bcd3170ce%40sessionmgr12&vid=4&hid=19> (15 April 2007).

⁴⁹ Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The forced migration of women to Australia* (Cambridge 1996); Deborah Oxley, ‘Packing her (Economic) Bags: Convict Women Workers’, *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 26 (1994-95); Deborah Oxley, ‘Female Convicts’, in Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia’s Past* (Cambridge, 1988); Reid, ‘Work, Sexuality and Resistance’.

Portia Robinson, Trudy Cowley and Lucy Frost have proved to be skilled exponents of that methodology.⁵⁰ Both methods have been employed in this study to understand the experience of the transported prostitute.

Proponents of the female convict as a prostitute and member of a criminal class, clashed in the early 1970s with feminist writers. Two discrete groups of prostitute and non-prostitute were evident in the writings of some feminist historians but they failed to review the categories and question what the prostitute really represented. The majority of female convicts were now relegated to the non-prostitute group and were reconstructed as successful family makers or economically valuable workers. And although historians were able to recognise and articulate a variety of female convict experiences, the prostitute was less comfortably accommodated within the historiography. It was not a role which could be celebrated, nor was it an acceptable tag to attach to family histories. The prostitute continued to be an outcast.

Ann Summers was less concerned with the validity of the label 'prostitute' than with the general implications behind its use.⁵¹ She concluded that female convicts were categorised as 'bad', but that it was largely for reasons beyond their control. They were vulnerable and sexually exploited and the legacy of this was evident in the oppression of Australian women in the mid twentieth century. Summers adopted the word 'whore' to reflect attitudes towards all female convicts. Their promiscuity was the result of an ideology which saw female convicts as serving the sexual needs of men, and the label of 'whore' was a means of social control. The link between all female convicts and prostitution was affirmed. These women were not marginal figures for Summers. They were at the mercy of 'imperial whore masters' and sexual service was another dimension to their punishment. There was no allowance for agency or choice on the part of the women who may have opted to earn their living that way. Summers identified

⁵⁰ Kay Daniels, *Convict Women* (Crow's Nest [New South Wales], 1998); Babette Smith, *A Cargo of Women: Susannah Watson & The Convicts of the Princess Royal* (Chippendale, Sydney, 1992); Portia Robinson, *The Hatch and Brood of Time: A Study of the first generation of native-born white Australians 1788-1828* (Oxford, 1985); Portia Robinson, *The Women of Botany Bay: A reinterpretation of the role of women in the origins of Australian society* (Ringwood, 1993); Trudy Cowley, *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks': lives of the 200 female Irish convicts transported on the Australasia from Dublin to Hobart in 1849* (New Town [Tasmania], 2005); Lucy Frost, *Abandoned Women: Scottish Convicts Exiled Beyond the Seas* (Sydney, 2012).

⁵¹ Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police: The Colonization of Women in Australia* (Harmondsworth, 1976), in particular 'Damned Whores', pp. 267-286.

prostitution as behaviour with its roots in social relations rather than character, as part of a patriarchal society. Prostitution was an indicator of social attitudes and structures, and not the outcome of moral deviance. Summers asked the question, 'what does it mean that they were prostitutes?' She concluded that it meant exploitation and domination by a colonizing sex.

Portia Robinson did much to restore the image of female convicts. She placed emphasis on marriage and the law-abiding convict by showing that in New South Wales only a minority of female convicts re-offended.⁵² Robinson used the Macquarie Colonial Papers to re-invent female convicts as family women. Her case studies comfortably rehabilitated them as mothers. Thus Robinson in revisionist mode dismissed the past pre-occupation with character, appearance, and sexual relations and installed convict women as the centre of the colonial family. She brushed the prostitute aside, 'There is no evidence to suggest that the British experiences of the convict women were the experiences of street women and prostitutes.'⁵³ Ultimately the economic opportunities in Australia meant that only the most depraved and incorrigible needed to resort to prostitution in the penal colonies. It was only the small percentage whose criminality was linked with prostitution which gave all convict women an undeserved reputation. Robinson believed that the label of 'damned whore' was due to the behaviour of a minority and that the majority led lives of outward respectability. They rose in the social scale through enterprise or marriage. Robinson assumed that a clear distinction could be made between the prostitute and family woman.⁵⁴

Katrina Alford endorsed Summers' premise of enforced whoredom through economic oppression, and in so doing she perpetuated the division between female convict as mother and female convict as prostitute, recognising them as the two discrete survival strategies for women.⁵⁵ While stressing prostitution as a trade and not a moral decision, Alford also saw it as the 'seamier' and most frequently selected option.⁵⁶ Since it was such an insidious fact of the colonial period, it is puzzling that having stressed the two

⁵² Robinson, *Hatch and Brood*; Robinson, *Women of Botany Bay*.

⁵³ Robinson, *Hatch and Brood*, p. 82.

⁵⁴ Robinson, *Women of Botany Bay*, pp. 94-96, 269.

⁵⁵ Katrina Alford, *Production or Reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850* (Melbourne, 1984), p. 89.

⁵⁶ Alford, *Production or Reproduction*, p. 89.

options for women, historians have consistently chosen to concentrate on the 'brighter side of the coin' and not examine the obverse.⁵⁷

Marian Aveling noted that historians were beguiled by the refractory prostitute rather than the 'loyal wife' and this was due partly to the seductive nature of early accounts such as Ralph Clark's which classified convict women as prostitutes.⁵⁸ Aveling conceded that rather than patriarchy being inherently bad, it could sometimes advantage convict women over convict men and over poor women in Britain.⁵⁹ In this she acknowledged that female sexuality was a strong bargaining tool.⁶⁰ Babette Smith expressed distaste for prostitutes but explained their choice as both economic and inevitable considering their immodest housing conditions and lack of Christian morality.⁶¹

Quantitative historian Deidre Beddoe found that female convicts were 'mainly young'. Taking her cue from Anne Summers she argued that this was only to be expected, 'given the motive of the British government in providing women as objects of sexual gratification for the male population of Australia'.⁶² To support her argument, Beddoe highlighted the case of two women aged 29 and 54 who were sentenced to transportation together. The older did not sail. Beddoe believed that, 'The explanation for this I am convinced, lies less in concern for an older woman than in the usefulness in Australia of a 54 year old woman as an object of sexual gratification for free males and male convicts.'⁶³ Beddoe found that 50 per cent of Welsh female convicts sent to Tasmania were designated as prostitutes and she posed the question as to whether convict women were all damned whores.⁶⁴ Her reply was: 'not before they sailed'. But to the same question within in the colony she provided an unequivocal 'Yes.' 'Mudie

⁵⁷ Alford, *Production or Reproduction*, p. 89.

⁵⁸ Marian Aveling [now Quartly], 'Bending the Bars: Convict Women and the State', in Kay Saunders and Ray Evans (eds.), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation* (Sydney, 1992), p. 156.

⁵⁹ Aveling, 'Bending the Bars', p. 153.

⁶⁰ Aveling [now Quartly], 'She Only Married to be Free; or, Cleopatra Vindicated', *Push from the Bush*, 2 (1978), p. 123.

⁶¹ Smith, *Cargo of Women*, p. 167.

⁶² Deirdre Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women: A Study of women transported from Wales to Australia, 1787-1852* (Barry [Wales], 1979), p. 33.

⁶³ Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, p. 55.

⁶⁴ Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, p. 37.

and the others spoke the truth. They were ... and it was the transportation system which had made them so.’⁶⁵

Miriam Dixson saw few advantages for women in the repressive patriarchal society, blaming it for the low status of women. She found no evidence to elevate female convicts from their self hating and ‘special quality of ugliness’, which contemporary observers had noted.⁶⁶ Whoredom or marriage were the only options available, as Dixson reiterated the strict categorisation between prostitute and non-prostitute.

Manning Clark had urged historians to go back to the original sources,⁶⁷ but in 1974 Raymond Evans published his study of colonial prostitution and spelt out the risks inherent in using contemporary reports to examine the subject.⁶⁸ Evans found that, ‘It is, therefore, particularly difficult to obtain an accurate picture of prostitutes and their life styles, when most reports about them are tinged with a tone of outrage which at times borders upon the hysterical.’⁶⁹ His study again highlighted the appropriation of the prostitute as a measure of deviancy whereby any open expression of female sexuality was considered the unsavoury behaviour of a prostitute. Evans believed that any retrospection was still biased by its sources, and the assumptions made by historians of the twentieth century at times indicated a failure to critically re-examine those sources. Beverley Kingston pointed out that we should not accept the value judgements made by historians prior to 1977 anymore than those of nineteenth-century commentators.⁷⁰ She suggested lines of inquiry ‘which do not rest only on a judgement as to whether the convict women were all bad, or only partially bad.’⁷¹ A sophisticated re-examination of convict records and court reports facilitated Kingston’s escape from that old set of value judgements, when she too stressed the importance of sources.⁷²

⁶⁵ Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women*, p. 134.

⁶⁶ Miriam Dixson, *The Real Matilda: Women and Identity in Australia to the present* (Ringwood, 1994), p. 124.

⁶⁷ C M H Clark, *Select Documents in Australian History 1788-1850* (Sydney, 1977), p ix.

⁶⁸ Raymond Evans, “‘Soiled Doves’: Prostitution in colonial Queensland”, in Kay Daniels (ed.), *So Much Hard Work, Women and Prostitution in Australian History* (Sydney, 1984), pp. 127-161. (Published originally in *Hecate* 1975).

⁶⁹ Evans, ‘Soiled Doves’, p. 134.

⁷⁰ Beverley Kingston, ‘Convicts’, in Beverly Kingston (ed.), *The World Moves Slowly: a documentary history of Australian women* (Stanmore [New South Wales], 1977), p. 8.

⁷¹ Kingston, ‘Convicts’, in *The World Moves Slowly*, p. 8.

⁷² Kingston, ‘Convicts’, in *The World Moves Slowly*, p. 8.

It took Michael Sturma to state that, 'In some respects, the stereotype of women convicts owes as much to historians as contemporaries.'⁷³ Sturma revealed how misunderstandings of sources could perpetuate nineteenth-century biases in the twentieth century.⁷⁴ He uncovered the creation of a stereotype when describing the female convict, but more importantly he voiced the ambiguity in the use of the word 'prostitute.' Sturma reminded us that a sexual dimension was integral to a large percentage of assigned female work in the colony and in Britain. By association he brought the prostitute in from the margins. The stereotype of the female convict, he argued, had emerged from the gap between working-class mores and the expectations of the upper middle class who described convict women. These expectations betrayed an ignorance of the working-class habit of co-habitation, and again reiterated the ambiguity surrounding prostitution.

Roberta Perkins declared at the outset that 'Too many people have had too much to say on a subject they are much too ignorant about.'⁷⁵ She aimed to battle the morass of myths, morality and misogyny which permeated the subject of prostitution.⁷⁶ Perkins successfully proved that the stigma of 'prostitute' was artificial, constructed and superficial and had been created through the Church, science and legislation.⁷⁷ She also weighed into the debate on 'imperial whore masters', conceding that there would be no reason for authorities to create or institutionalize prostitution because there were already sufficient numbers of prostitutes being transported who would adopt it as a means of survival.⁷⁸

While Sturma and others described the confusion between co-habitation and prostitution it took Kay Daniels to re-introduce the convict prostitute as a central figure. Daniels defined the dilemma facing those who would advocate for the prostitute when she showed that few speak in official records and when they do it is not on ground of their own choosing but through court and police records. Even then it is only the voices of

⁷³ Sturma, 'Eye of the Beholder', p. 5.

⁷⁴ Sturma, 'Eye of the Beholder', p. 3.

⁷⁵ Frances Perkins, *Working Girls, Prostitutes their life and social control* (Canberra 1991), p.1.

⁷⁶ Perkins, *Working Girls*, p. 1.

⁷⁷ Perkins, *Working Girls*, p. 63.

⁷⁸ Perkins, *Working Girls*, p. 70.

women who were charged, yet the absences are also important.⁷⁹ In fact ‘our knowledge of convict women is too often solely confined to the charges laid against them.’⁸⁰ Daniels deplored the compulsion to sort the good women from the bad, the prostitutes from the respectable family women, to establish the difference then contrast the character and experiences of the two distinct groups.⁸¹ She believed that historians asserted the marginality of the prostitute experience and failed to look at prostitution itself or rethink the assumptions about a prostitute’s so called depravity.⁸²

Daniels succinctly identified four discrete narratives in the debate about the nature and fate of colonial women. They were the female entrepreneur, convict whore, happy family woman and abandoned wife.⁸³ Historians, she believed, had spent too much time choosing between the four categories to select a single fate. She voiced unease that Australian studies were concerned with the prostitute as an individual or a ‘type’, the archetypal bad woman or sexual deviant and prostitution as an indicator of character, moral status or social worth.⁸⁴ Daniels was therefore sceptical about the tradition of trying to distinguish the prostitute from the non-prostitute.⁸⁵ She reiterated that the image of the prostitute was a social construction wherein prostitution was viewed as the opposite of both marriage and work.⁸⁶ Whereas some historians had readily accepted the premise that the British authorities acted as ‘whore-masters’, Daniels concurred with Roberta Perkins that there was no coherent blueprint for the exploitation of female bodies either in reproductive or sexual terms.⁸⁷

As twentieth-century historians adopted more sophisticated quantitative methods, their findings made it possible to also track more subtle motivations in their statistical pursuit of the prostitute. H S Payne used statistics as a convenient way of separating the two groups, whereas Robson had used them to confirm the degeneracy of all female convicts. Payne’s early statistical work has been overshadowed by his antecedent Lloyd

⁷⁹ Kay Daniels, ‘Introduction’, in Kay Daniels (ed.), *So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History* (Sydney, 1984), p. 5.

⁸⁰ Daniels, ‘Prostitution in Tasmania’, in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 21.

⁸¹ Daniels, ‘Prostitution in Tasmania’, in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 22.

⁸² Daniels, ‘Prostitution in Tasmania’, in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 27.

⁸³ Daniels, *Convict Women*, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Daniels, ‘Introduction’, *So Much Hard Work*, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Daniels, ‘Prostitution in Tasmania’, in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 28.

⁸⁶ Daniels, ‘Introduction’, in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Daniels, *Convict Women*, p. 44.

Robson, but in 1961 Payne found that 24 per cent of women in his sample who arrived in Van Diemen's Land between 1843 and 1853 were described as prostitutes.⁸⁸ He concluded that very few chose to pursue their career in the colonies as only 5 per cent of their colonial charges involved prostitution.⁸⁹ Many could therefore be happily relegated to a group which 'settled well'.⁹⁰ The prostitute remained the unreformed, problematic deviant through her rejection of a settled lifestyle.

Deborah Oxley also used a database, but she employed it to remove prostitution from the realm of morality, and place it within a capitalist economy. Few have dealt with the prostitute with such clarity and objectivity as Oxley when she argued that prostitution could be seen as a structural aspect of capitalist patriarchy, whereby sex was commercialized and turned into a commodity.⁹¹ The location of prostitutes in the criminal sphere was the result of moral, religious, and class biases. A different moral framework could perceive prostitution as an occupation and evidence of women's working class origins. Women's role in this society was to reproduce the working class – future, past and present, and part of that role was sexual service to men through marriage, force or payment. So the sex industry was an important part of life and work options for women and fitted snugly into a capitalist ideology and practice. The hierarchy put working-class women into a role of exploitation as workers and oppression as women. Their participation in paid labour was conditioned by their other responsibilities for the reproduction and care of the working class, which included child care, aged care, and care of the sick. These responsibilities limited the availability and timing of a woman's paid working hours and at the same time created another sphere of work which was either unpaid or at best low paid.⁹² Prostitution was thus another function of an economy in which women were disadvantaged.⁹³ As Oxley pointed out, rather than investigating the system in which women prostituted themselves, their economic motives or other aspects of their life, many historians have accepted the

⁸⁸ H S Payne, 'A Statistical Study of Female Convicts in Tasmania 1843-53', *THRA Papers and Proceedings*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1961), p. 59.

⁸⁹ Payne, 'A Statistical Study', p. 63.

⁹⁰ Payne, 'A Statistical Study', p. 59.

⁹¹ Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers*, p. 87.

⁹² Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers*, p. 87.

⁹³ Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 7.

contemporary view that prostitution was evidence of the morally corrupt nature of female convicts.⁹⁴

Like Oxley, Kirsty Reid also sought to divest the female convict of her mystique and position her within the colonial labour force. Reid's study of the assignment system in Van Diemen's Land established the contribution which female convict labour made to the colonial economy.⁹⁵ Her more recent scholarship has attempted to downplay the gender bias in convict historiography which cast women as the 'colonised sex', and focus rather on the role of class which she sees as more instrumental in determining outcomes for prisoners.⁹⁶

Joy Damousi considered gender relations as vital to the study of female convict history. She found another reason for the fear and demonization of the prostitute when she explored those gender relations within the boundaries of female convict ships.⁹⁷ Damousi showed that the concern with order on board female transports was represented in the public space where order, rationality, control, regimentation and routine existed. This was contrasted with the private space which on female convict ships became an area of chaos and disorder, unsettling the imperatives of efficiency, order and rank through sexual promiscuity.⁹⁸ That private space became sexualised and the rebelliousness of women on ships was defined in sexual terms, so that the potential for disruption differed in nature and scope to that of male convicts.⁹⁹ It followed that the confined, claustrophobic space of a convict ship accentuated sexual tensions between women and their commanders.¹⁰⁰ Marriage was seen as a de-pollutant, or a state of purity and morality which could contain female sexuality.¹⁰¹ Convict women openly defied those boundaries of sexuality, morality and femininity and Damousi saw the assertion of female sexuality as a form of resistance. This was evident by the severity

⁹⁴ Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers*, p. 86.

⁹⁵ Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance'.

⁹⁶ Kirsty Reid, *Gender, crime and empire: Convicts, settlers and the state in early colonial Australia* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 5-8.

⁹⁷ Joy Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 12.

⁹⁸ Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, p. 12.

⁹⁹ Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁰ Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, p. 33.

¹⁰¹ Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, p. 36.

with which it was punished. Such resistance she recognised in the behaviour of prostitutes, the sexual misconduct of assigned servants, and lesbians.¹⁰²

Marilyn Lake continued the theme of the gendered view of convict rebellion. When rebellion at the Cascades Female Factory was interpreted as the typical disorderly conduct to be expected from prostitutes, Lake recognised misappropriation of the term.¹⁰³ She claimed that such behaviour among men was considered to be solidarity and hailed by Russell Ward as instrumental in founding the Australian Legend.¹⁰⁴ Lake believed that if Ward had widened his focus he would have found stronger evidence for solidarity amongst women than men.¹⁰⁵ Within the larger historiographical debate which has attempted to characterise women as either victims or agents, Lake urged us to consider women as both, and argued that they were not mutually incompatible.¹⁰⁶

As recently as 2007 Raelene Francis found it necessary to re-iterate the futility of separating the prostitute from other women in colonial Australia. Since 67 per cent of women transported from England were domestic servants and their work frequently included sexual service it rendered 'meaningless for these women the sharp distinction which respectable society drew between prostitution and honest labour.'¹⁰⁷ She examined prostitution in Australia in the colonial period and the stereotypes which were so securely reinforced. Francis placed Australian prostitution into a wider global context and confirmed the findings of Judith and Daniel Walkowitz in Britain, wherein women did not always trade sex for sheer survival.¹⁰⁸ It could buy those extras like alcohol and tobacco. The choice of prostitution was not always made under duress, and could at times prove advantageous to women as they made calculated decisions. Echoes of Walkowitz were also evident in Francis' description of how women moved in and out of prostitution according to their circumstances, and combined legitimately sanctioned

¹⁰² Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, p. 66.

¹⁰³ Lake, 'Convict Women as Objects', p. 44.

¹⁰⁴ Russell B Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne, 1966).

¹⁰⁵ Lake, 'Convict Women as Objects', p. 44.

¹⁰⁶ Lake, 'Convict Women as Objects', p. 48.

¹⁰⁷ Raelene Francis, *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution* (Sydney, 2007), p. 10.

¹⁰⁸ Judith and Daniel Walkowitz, "'We Are Not Beasts of the Field': Prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Act', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3/4 (1973), pp. 73-106; Judith Walkowitz, 'Male Vice and Feminist Virtue: Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *History Workshop*, vol. 13 (Spring, 1982), pp. 79-93; Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*; Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London, 1992).

employment with casual commercial sex. Francis is another who refuted the theory of the colonial authorities as ‘imperial whore-masters’, and was careful to state what so many overlooked – that the colonial authorities were not a monolithic entity. Policy varied depending on the level of authority, be it the colonial office or governor, and where over the six decades of transportation the argument was situated. Sexual practices and mores were not static over those sixty years.¹⁰⁹

Global historiography

The historiography of colonial prostitution has by definition concentrated on women within the colony. But those women came from a British cohort which has also been subjected to intense scrutiny over past decades. Much of the impetus to reconstruct the colonial prostitute was based on the ground breaking work of Judith and Daniel Walkowitz in Britain during 1970s.¹¹⁰ They questioned and then firmly refuted many nineteenth-century myths about prostitution. Their work was compelling in that it presented a very different image of the prostitute and offered a more subtle and complex alternative to Summers’ powerless and exploited ‘damned whore’. The Walkowitz prostitute possessed agency and a degree of power. Using the operation of power in a Foucauldian sense as a dispersed and decentralised force, they comfortably placed the prostitute within a level of power, however unequal it may have proven to be.¹¹¹ They gave a far reaching synthesis of the nineteenth century, its attitudes, players, and motivations, and they set the contemporary debates into a political context. Importantly they acknowledged the manner in which radical working class critics and evangelists had manipulated the theme of prostitution for their political ends. The Walkowitz discussion on sexuality in the nineteenth century pre-empted the later work of Lynda Nead and Roberta Perkins.

Judith Walkowitz questioned myths about prostitution which had been handed down from the Victorian era, whereby prostitutes were depicted as social outcasts cut off from the community of the labouring poor. She disputed the homily that the wages of sin

¹⁰⁹ Francis, *Selling Sex*, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ Walkowitz and Walkowitz, “We Are Not Beasts of the Field”; Judith Walkowitz, ‘Male Vice and Feminist Virtue’; Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*; Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*.

¹¹¹ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, p. 8.

were death and that all prostitutes were powerless and lacked agency. On the contrary Walkowitz found that ‘most women’s entry into prostitution appears to have been ... a response to local conditions of the urban job market ... Placed in a vulnerable economic and social position, some women may have found the shorter hours and better pay of prostitution a temporary solution to their immediate difficulties.’¹¹² Prostitution was simply one of a number of choices. Men turned to theft and women to prostitution. Yet in spite of these findings, some later investigators of prostitution such as Deidre Beddoe and Frances Finnegan remained sceptical about the Walkowitz conclusions.

Nineteenth-century commentators received an endorsement in the work of Frances Finnegan when she studied prostitution in York.¹¹³ Her reassessment of nineteenth-century sources led her to suggest that modern scholars may not have painted prostitutes as sufficiently degraded. She asked why the popular image of the prostitute as a demoralised creature, treading the downward path to drunkenness, destitution and disease, was one which was so widely held, if it was untrue.¹¹⁴ Finnegan used original documents and newspapers and her research found few redeeming features among her subjects. York’s streets were peopled with lower-class prostitutes who ‘sickened’, took to drink or became physically unattractive.¹¹⁵ Physical beauty, strong constitutions and intelligence were absent from her subjects who she found to be brutalized, degraded by their occupation, suffering both physically and mentally, and regarded both by society and themselves as outcasts.¹¹⁶ ‘Many were simple minded, most were uncouth’, and almost all showed signs of emotional unbalance and violent behaviour. Even with the help of a rescue society few prostitutes were permanently rescued or reformed, for those who wished to abandon prostitution were competing with more stable, desirable and trustworthy women for employment.¹¹⁷

In the mid 1980s Luise White asked, ‘Can we move beyond saying that women become prostitutes out of economic necessity - if they did not, why would they charge?’¹¹⁸ She

¹¹² Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 14.

¹¹³ Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution: a study of Victorian prostitutes in York* (Cambridge, 1979).

¹¹⁴ Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, p. 8.

¹¹⁵ Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, pp. 166, 214-215.

¹¹⁷ Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, p. 215.

¹¹⁸ Luise White, ‘Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians’, *Criminal Justice History*, vol. 6 (1985), p. 201.

pleaded for a scholarship which did not moralise nor take a metaphor of women's passivity, degradation and victimization, prove how accurate it was, and conclude that it was the fault of men.¹¹⁹ White was another who urged researchers to consider the way in which source materials were handled. Since prostitutes rarely left records other than those of their incarceration, she found that their few public utterances were self serving, ritualized tales of victimization told to solicit sympathy, and often written by people who wanted to arrest or reform them.¹²⁰ White showed how prostitution moved out of the realm of casual labour and into that of organised crime. It was not part of the usual definition of vice, yet prostitution had become a vice topic by virtue of the efforts undertaken to eradicate it.¹²¹ She saw the history of prostitution as the equivalent of a holographic show, performed with lasers and mirrors. While the literature dealt with subjects such as the family, waged work, and industrialisation, and painted a vibrant, three dimensional picture, for White it was the wrong picture. It was based on skewed data, and on a situation which the sources themselves helped create. 'Should we take reformers' data seriously?' she asked. Yes, she conceded, they did spend a lot of time around prostitutes but that did not mean that the impressions which they recorded were accurate. By using their data, to what extent have we internalized or contextualized or Marxified their categories and failed to investigate what prostitutes did, who they were and who visited them?¹²² White concluded that this was 'not the rhetoric with which one writes social history!'¹²³ Instead it is 'waffling ideology.'¹²⁴

Rather than prostitution being a social evil or threat to the institution of the family, she believed that prostitution was one of the ways in which families stayed together.¹²⁵ It allowed women to support children, partners and siblings. White called for more histories of prostitution that are about prostitutes wherein we abandon exhausted and exhausting exercises in the image of the prostitute or attitudes towards prostitutes because they have merely weakened the scholarship. Authors had been so busy looking

¹¹⁹ White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians', p. 201.

¹²⁰ White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians', p. 203.

¹²¹ White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians', p. 206.

¹²² White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians', p. 204.

¹²³ White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians', p. 205.

¹²⁴ White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians', p. 220.

¹²⁵ White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians', p. 208.

at how prostitution looked to others that they had forgotten to research what prostitutes were doing and what exactly reformers had objected to.¹²⁶

Lynda Nead attempted to explain why our sources reveal the prostitute as such a pariah and she confirmed that the issue of prostitution was bound up with many social, political and commercial issues. Nead placed morality as a central component within class identity, nation and ideology of empire. A stable domestic base was considered vital to Britain's international leadership and domination of foreign competitors.¹²⁷ Women were believed to hold responsibility for the purity of the home, and private morality was the source and index of public morality. It therefore followed that the moral condition of the nation derived from the moral standards of women.¹²⁸ And fear of immorality focused on prostitution – a manifestation of moral degeneration which 'represented a nexus of anxieties relating to class, nation and empire.'¹²⁹ Nead also suggested that because prostitution involved the regular exchange of sex for money and was highly visible, the prostitute was invested with powerful and independent qualities which were normally the unique privilege of the white middle-class male.¹³⁰

Sources were also important to Tony Henderson's 'prostitute-centred history', as he aimed to produce a history of prostitutes, not of prostitution. His stated aim was to avoid history through agents of the law and moralisers.¹³¹ Henderson used cases from the records of the parish and ward watches of Westminster and London to produce a study which defied the image of the prostitute as a victim.¹³²

Although Maria Luddy's research focused on the latter part of the nineteenth century, her Ireland had much in common with the one which transported its young women to Van Diemen's Land.¹³³ As with the Walkowitzs, Luddy accurately recreated the community in which prostitutes lived. But in Ireland she found a powerful Catholicism which denied the presence of prostitution. The label nevertheless found its way onto the records of its female prisoners as they boarded ships in Dublin for Van Diemen's Land.

¹²⁶ White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers and Historians', p. 222.

¹²⁷ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 91.

¹²⁸ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 92.

¹²⁹ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, pp. 93-94.

¹³⁰ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 95.

¹³¹ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 11.

¹³² Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 5.

¹³³ Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*.

Conclusion

In spite of much scholarship, there is an ongoing refusal to accept that the colonial prostitute was anything but aberrant - socially, physically, morally and emotionally. This is a legacy of the late nineteenth-century propaganda which has filtered into a public consciousness. The colonial prostitute remains the social, physical and emotional outcast. Yet evidence would suggest that Matilda Allgood was not cast off by her British family nor was her colonial life one of loneliness and isolation. During the nineteenth century when communication between Britain and Tasmania was still problematic, William Allgood showed a determination to contact his sister whom he had not seen for forty years.¹³⁴ Matilda had in the meantime married and created her own family unit, and whilst she experienced poverty and ill health, the inquest into her death demonstrated that she also received kindness and compassion.¹³⁵ The individual histories of women like Matilda who were transported to Van Diemen's Land did not always comply with the prescribed fate of women who turned to prostitution. Such prescriptions pervaded the nineteenth-century historiography and continue to have resonance not only in popular culture but among some historians who all too often have appropriated the prostitute for ideological purposes.

¹³⁴ TAHO POL709/1/20, *Tasmanian Police Gazette*, 9 January 1885, p. 6, 'Missing Friend'.

¹³⁵ TAHO SC195/1/20, Findings, depositions and associate papers relating to Coroner's Inquests: Index to Inquests 1828-1930 (3020), 15 June 1853, pp. 4-6.

CHAPTER 2: HOW DO CONVICT RECORDS IDENTIFY PROSTITUTION?

INTERROGATING THE SOURCES

Introduction: Sarah Gates' story

Sarah Gates may have been more suited to the role of a mother than that of a thief, but the rent was due and a promise was not about to satisfy the landlady.¹ Lodging house keepers in London's East End were immune to tales of woe. It was nine years since she and George Potter had set up house together, and law writing was an uncertain living for a man with a wife and four children. But they had always scraped by, never destitute but never ahead either. As Sarah made her way along Temple Bar she might have contemplated how easily her friend Eliza Smith could relieve a hapless victim of his watch. Stray coins and watches often found their way into Eliza's pocket.² Theft was more lucrative than a night of fumbling against walls with drunken clients who expected her favours for free. So with Eliza by her side Sarah laid her plan and turning the corner into Pickett Street Sarah spotted her own hapless victim. As it turned out however, the mishap would fall on Sarah that night. Joseph Lodge felt her snatch the gold pin from his throat and just as quickly he snatched it back. He would have gladly continued on his way but the watchman had noticed him drop his glove and in returning it learnt of

¹ TAHO CON40/1/3, Sarah Gates (70G) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 245.

² TAHO CON40/1/9, Eliza Smith (120S) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 60. Eliza Smith had earlier in the evening robbed a client in her lodgings. She was transported with Sarah on the *Sovereign*. For Eliza's story see chapter 3: Who creates the prostitute?

the fracas with the two women.³ Sarah was taken to the watch house and four children awoke to a cold hearth and an absent mother.

Following her conviction, the gaoler at Newgate listed Sarah alongside other prostitutes who were destined for transportation on the *Sovereign*, adding that she had been ‘living in prostitution for 9 years’.⁴ When questioned on board, Sarah explained, ‘I lived 9 years with Geo Potter - a law writer - I had four children by him’.⁵ But the intelligence of the gaoler prevailed and her colonial conduct record contained the entry ‘prostitute’ in the *Gaol Report* section. That entry qualifies Sarah Gates for inclusion in this study.

Thirty per cent of women transported to Van Diemen's Land had the words ‘prostitute’, ‘unfortunate’ or ‘on the town’ written on at least one of their records.⁶ This investigation will try to establish how the terms were used and understood by the early nineteenth-century men who recorded them. Eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature provides indicators as to how they were used by middle-class observers, social reformers, journalists and men of science. The aim is now to discover whether the terms held the same meaning in those published works and the convict records. While this study will attempt to test the extent to which women who were so labelled had in fact engaged in sex work, in many cases this is ultimately unknowable. The three terms were employed in gaol lists and returns, ship manifests, surgeons-superintendent's journals, indents and conduct registers. Analysis is limited to the three descriptors because they alone were used in the convict records as a possible reference to prostitution. While the words ‘disorderly’ and ‘loose’ were also used to describe female convicts, their meaning was not sufficiently consistent to support systematic analysis. Words such as ‘dollymop’, ‘harlot’ and ‘trollop’ were popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth century as an alternative to ‘prostitute’, but they do not appear in the convict records.

One issue which needs to be addressed is the use of the term ‘whore’, or rather its absence from the convict records of Van Diemen's Land during the assignment period.

³ *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913*, online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18270405-175-verdict970&div=t18270405-175#highlight>, 5 April 1827, pp. 77-78 (20 January 2010).

⁴ ML TP 22 CY 1274, A List of 81 Female Convicts embarked on the Ship *Sovereign*; ML TP CY 1273, Ship manifest for the *Sovereign*.

⁵ ML TP D3 CY1195, Indent for the *Sovereign*.

⁶ Appendix A: Women identified as prostitutes who arrived in Van Diemen's Land 1822 -1843.

It is true that Lieutenant Ralph Clark particularly relished the term ‘damned whores’.⁷ Ann Summers repeated the phrase in the title of her book *Damned Whores and God’s Police*.⁸ Clark and Summers have endowed the word ‘whore’ with an undeserved prominence in writings on the female convict. Not only is it absent from official documents, but contemporary observers rarely used the word. William Logan in his work on prostitution often referred to a ‘harlot’ or ‘harlotry’ but not ‘whore’, although he employed the term ‘whoremongers’.⁹ Henry Mayhew was equally shy of the word, he and his contemporaries preferring to use ‘prostitute’ or ‘unfortunate’. Laura Gowing believed that while vague insinuations surrounded the insults aimed at women, the use of ‘whore’ inferred that sexual behaviour was being addressed. Yet at the same time it did not necessarily carry the financial implications of prostitution.¹⁰

The second assumption to arise from the wholesale adoption of the word ‘whore’ in the historiography is that Lieutenant Clark meant the word in the sense that we accept ‘prostitute’ today. This is not necessarily the case. Anna Clark agrees that it could mean ‘prostitute’, although it was also used in a much broader sense as an insult hurled at all women who were visible on the street. The definition could cover traders and businesswomen; those displaying a lack of self respect; women who were loud and possessing little self-control; women who were promiscuous or those refusing to conform to the control of fathers or husbands.¹¹ By accepting Anna Clark’s definition, it is possible that the majority of female convicts were ‘whores’ in that broader sense but not ‘prostitutes’. This assumption in no way denies the cultural, social and gendered chasm which separated men such as Clark from female convicts, nor the ignorance and hypocrisy which typified that relationship. Instead it demands a reassessment of one of the clichés of Australian history.

⁷ *The Journal and Letters of Lt. Ralph Clark 1787-1792* (Australian Documents Library in Association with The Library of Australian History Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1981), 16 May 1787, 19 June 1787, 3 July 1787, 18 July 1787, 1 August 1787, 12 February 1788, 7 September 1791.

⁸ Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God’s Police: The Colonization of Women in Australia* (Harmondsworth, 1976).

⁹ William Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation, of Female Prostitution in London, Leeds, and Rochdale, and Especially in the City of Glasgow; with Remarks on the Cause, Extent, Results, and Remedy of the Evil* (Glasgow, 1843 [Microfiche at the National Library of Australia: Goldsmiths Kress Library of Economic Literature, Printed books 1801-1850]), p. 38.

¹⁰ Laura Gowing, ‘Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London’, *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 35 (1993), pp. 3-4.

¹¹ Anna Clark, ‘Whores and Gossips: sexual reputation in London 1770-1825’, in Arina Angerman (ed.), *Current Issues in Women’s History* (London, 1989), pp. 235, 242.

Conduct registers

This series of records was the starting point for the study (hereafter known as the CON40 series). Although they were not chronologically the first records in which a woman could be linked to prostitution, they are given priority because all ships in the database assembled for this study, and all women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land after 1816, had a CON40 entry. The conduct registers became the most important document within the colony and in some cases continued to expand long after the woman had earned her freedom.¹² Governor William Sorell established the practice of keeping conduct registers. After the passage of the British Transportation Act of 1824, an event which coincided with the commencement of George Arthur's governorship, the existing conduct records were reorganised and consolidated into one group.¹³ This was the series that later became known as CON40. As a bureaucratic tool their utility rested in the manner in which they enabled that information on an individual to be held centrally and continually updated. They thereby served as a guide for indulgences such as a ticket-of-leave, permission to marry and the convict's ultimate freedom. They contained information about the crime and sentence, family background, marital status, and sometimes the surgeon-superintendent's and gaoler's comments. Most importantly of all they contained the woman's own statement which was recorded prior to disembarkation. The amount of interaction which the prisoner had with colonial authorities determined the size of her CON40 entry. No trade was entered on this record, but information on prostitution could be found either in the *Gaol Report* section, the *Surgeon's Report*, or as part of the woman's own statement.¹⁴

Gaol lists or returns

Chronologically, these are the first records relevant to this study to be drawn up.¹⁵ They were called variously lists or returns and noted the women who were under sentence of transportation from each gaol. Josiah Spode questioned the accuracy of the information which came from the gaols and considered the surgeons' comments to be more

¹² The convict's death was sometimes recorded as well as inquiries from relatives. Additions to the record may have continued as long as fifty years post servitude. See TAHO CON40/1/2, Matilda Allgood (154A) per *Emma Eugenia* (1842), image 23.

¹³ Lieutenant-Governor William Sorell (1817-1824); Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur (1824-1836).

¹⁴ Appendix B: Flow chart of record linkages.

¹⁵ For male convicts this was the hulk list.

reliable.¹⁶ On the gaol list or return the label ‘prostitute’ could appear as part of the description of the crime or as a trade. The document could take the form of a single page, which listed all the women who were delivered to the ship from the particular gaol, or each woman was allotted an individual page. The format of the document may have depended on the numbers being delivered to the ship from that gaol, or possibly the practice of each institution. Some contained a description of the woman’s crime, her trade, age, character and disposition, connections and former course of life. For many women it is the only surviving source of some personal information and was often more detailed when the prisoner had a previous record of incarceration. For example Sarah King per *Lady of the Lake* arrived from the Derby County Gaol, where the gaol list disclosed details of her crime which did not appear on her indent or CON40 record.¹⁷ The gaoler Richard Eaton knew her well and recorded her crime as,

Stealing and taking away from a Dwelling House 8^s 0^d in money and several other articles. Viz. one cotton shawl of the value of 1/2 and 3 lb. weight of beef, of the value of 1/6.

He further explained that,

She has been connected with a number of bad characters in paying base coin and committing robberies, led a most profligate course of life. She was discharged from my custody on the 13th day of April last. A lady who visits the prison undertook to support her till she could get work. The House she sent her to be provided with every necessary she left on the 17th of April taking with her all the poor people’s money, Meat and some clothing.¹⁸

Sarah King’s indent however, on which her colonial history was based, is sparse in comparison, for there her criminal background was recorded only as ‘stealing a shawl, once before for picking pockets, once for vagrancy’.¹⁹ This example demonstrates the importance of the gaol documents to historians, especially as Sarah’s statement on arrival recorded in the CON40 series added nothing to her indent information. It raises the possibility that what is believed to be the woman’s statement on arrival may not have always been the outcome of a pre-disembarkation interrogation, but may have

¹⁶ TAHO CSO22/1/50, ‘Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline, 1841-1843’, p. 138, evidence of Josiah Spode.

¹⁷ TAHO CON40/1/5, Sarah King (57K) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 253.

¹⁸ ML TP D3 CY 1195, Gaol reports for women on the *Lady of the Lake*.

¹⁹ ML TP 24 CY 1276, Indent for the *Lady of the Lake*.

been copied straight from the indent. If that were correct, it questions the accepted view of how the CON40 record series was compiled. While the process of recording a convict's details and the interview by the Muster Master or Principal Superintendent of Convicts is well documented, Sarah's records suggest that this procedure was not always followed.²⁰

Information on Jane Walker came from the gaol at Newcastle-upon-Tyne on a separate sheet of paper entitled, 'A Certificate Specifying the Description of the Crime of Jane Walker a convict.' It informed interested parties that,

She has been 15 years in Newcastle as a common prostitute and during that Period more Money has been stolen from Guests in her House by herself and by women who have lived with her than in any other Bawdy House in the Town. In fact she has been a common Plunderer in that way.²¹

Jane Walker's indent merely stated that she stole money.²²

Margaret Hume's gaol report also contained information which did not follow her to the colony. Her gaoler claimed that she,

Has been a girl upon the Town about a year and a half. Has now a proper sense of her misconduct. Has behaved particularly well since she has been in confinement, and applied herself constantly to Religious duties ... Has had a good education and is a clever girl. Was seduced when very young and lived with that person until his death.²³

Yet the sparse entry of, 'stealing from the person, once a week for vagrancy', was all that was placed on her indent.²⁴ She was most certainly questioned on arrival and volunteered what appeared to be contradictory information concerning her background when she admitted to 'stealing 100 guineas from William Hope Esq in the house of Mrs Harris, North Shields. Tried with Robert Graham with whom I lived from the time I left

²⁰ *British Parliamentary Papers. Report from the Select Committee on Transportation together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index. Crime and Punishment – Transportation 2* (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), pp. 281-281, evidence of Lieutenant George Arthur. See also TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline, 1841-1843', p. 134, evidence of Josiah Spode.

²¹ ML TP D3 CY 1195, Gaol report from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne; TAHO CON40/1/9, Jane Walker (131W) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 288.

²² ML TP 24 CY 1276, Indent for the *Lady of the Lake*.

²³ ML TP D3 CY1195, Gaol report for Margaret Hume female convict embarked on the *Lady of the Lake*.

²⁴ ML TP 24 CY 1276, Indent for the *Lady of the Lake*.

home. Graham is a hairdresser and was transported.’²⁵ At the pre-embarkation stage a certificate was also provided by the medical officer of the gaol. It too could take the form of a separate document or could be a statement at the end of the gaol list. One such accompanied women who arrived at the *Lady of the Lake*, and read,

These are to certify that women named in the margin now
prisoners in the Castle of Chester and Under Orders of
Transportation are free from every putrid and infectious
Disorder and fit to be removed, Signed Llewellyn Jones Junior
Surgeon-superintendent, Chester Castle 20/May/1829.²⁶

Surgeon-superintendent's journal

A function of the gaol documents was to provide the surgeon-superintendent on board each transport vessel with an introduction to his charges. As such it provided the basis for shipboard records and this may explain the frequent repetition of the woman's trade as 'prostitute' in the medical journals. Alternatively, the surgeon-superintendent may have garnered such information from the woman herself. He was legally obliged to keep a daily journal and note not only medical cases but disciplinary action, good behaviour, weather conditions and any significant event.²⁷ If a woman remained healthy and failed to offend, she might never officially come to the attention of the surgeon-superintendent. But it was customary to muster women twice daily so if the medical officer was conscientious he could still become acquainted with all the women in his care. An aside by the surgeon-superintendent on the *Gilbert Henderson* illustrates the value of his report to historians.²⁸ Ann McDermott had her age recorded on the gaol return as forty three but Surgeon-Superintendent Hamett noted that she claimed to be sixty, and he concurred with that estimate. Yet his observation failed to alter her documented age as her colonial description list recorded Ann as forty four.²⁹ This was most likely a subterfuge to comply with age restrictions for transportees.³⁰ Not only did the journal identify women as prostitutes, but it also recorded cases of venereal disease.

²⁵ TAHO CON40/1/5, Margaret Hume (135H) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 72.

²⁶ ML TP D3 CY 1195, Gaol reports and papers for the *Lady of the Lake*.

²⁷ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 348, no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on board convict ships.

²⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* (1840) Surgeon-Superintendent Sir John Hamett.

²⁹ TAHO CON19/1/12, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Gilbert Henderson*).

³⁰ Ann McDermott is not part of this database as she has no record of prostitution, but she is cited as an example of the value of the surgeon-superintendent's journal. The guidelines stated that women should be under forty five years of age.

While the presence of the disease did not of course mean that a woman was a prostitute, it would be more likely to occur within a group of women who were identified as sex workers. The surgeon's journal was presented to the Lieutenant-Governor on arrival in the colony, and a duplicate copy was returned to Britain on the next available ship. Journals survive for forty three of the forty five ships in this study.

Ship manifest

Gaol lists and returns were amalgamated to create a further list on board possibly compiled by the surgeon-superintendent or a clerk and separate to the indent.³¹ It is likely that this list was part of the documentation which was delivered to the colonial governor on arrival in the colony. One such list from the *Jane* is annotated with the directive, 'the Muster Master'. I have adopted the term 'ship manifest' as an explanatory title, to describe a list which is neither the indent, assignment list, nor the gaol return, but was prepared by the surgeon-superintendent or a clerk during the voyage. The label 'prostitute' could appear as part of the description of the crime or as a trade on these lists.

Indent

This was a legal document which conveyed the women's labour to the colonial authorities and was signed by the Secretary of State.³² Opinion is divided as to its exact provenance. Deborah Oxley used indents for her study on women arriving in New South Wales between 1826 and 1840. She described how a clerk boarded the ship prior to sailing and by using the hulk lists (or gaol lists for women) prepared the indent. The process may have been the same for women arriving in Van Diemen's Land.³³ Peter Eldershaw, however, suggested that the indents held at the Tasmanian Archives and

³¹ In consultation with Robyn Eastley, Manager of Collections at the Tasmanian Archive Heritage Office, and other academics working in the field of convict transportation it has been confirmed that numerous such lists survive from various convict transports arriving in Van Diemen's Land. The presence of these and other unnamed lists indicate that the process was more complicated on some ships. Two ship manifests with slightly different information were generated on board the *Jane* as well as the indent. Gaol lists, returns and ship manifests can be found at: ML TP D4 CY1196 (*Jane*); ML TP D5 CY 1197 (*Navarino*); ML TP D4 CY 1196 (*Platina*); ML TP D4 CY1196 (*Nautilus*); ML TP D5 CY 1197 (*Royal Admiral*); ML TP D3 CY 1195 (*Lady of the Lake*); one page of a gaol document for three women has been located for the *Majestic* at TAHO CON70/1/2.

³² Peter Ross Eldershaw, *Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania*, Section Three, Convict Department (TAHO, 2003 [1965]), p. 19.

³³ Oxley, *Convicts Maids*, pp. 19-27.

Heritage Office had a slightly different provenance. He believed that they were created at the latter end of the voyage before disembarkation.³⁴ The indent for the *East London* supports Eldershaw's theory. There is no personal family information recorded for the women who died during the voyage, nor for those women who were transferred to the hospital on arrival.³⁵ This suggests that the indent was compiled at the point when it was no longer possible to collect such information.

The definition of an indent is further confused by Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur's attempts to describe the document to the Select Committee on Transportation. He mentioned a 'return' which the surgeon-superintendent drew up and delivered, which included,

the name, the number, the age, the birth-place, the crime, the period of conviction, when and where the sentence, whether he can read or write, or whether he can only read, or whether he can do neither, where taught, his trade, the character he brought from the gaoler, the character from the hulk, the alleged qualifications what he is able to do, and then his behaviour on board the transport. In addition to this the surgeon superintendent presents the *indent* which is a nominal list of all the prisoners on board, their period of sentence, and some few other particulars connected with them, and the crime for which they have been transported, having the signature of the Secretary of State.³⁶

The document which Arthur called a 'return' describes what we accept to be the indent. For the purposes of this study an indent refers to the document which was compiled on board during the voyage. Information was gathered from the gaol lists or returns, the ship manifest, an interview process, and the surgeon-superintendent's observations of the women. It contained a large amount of information on family background as well as the time and place of conviction, age, height and trade of the women. After the 1820s it also carried details of the women's religion and literacy.³⁷ The label of prostitute no longer indicated her trade but was transferred into the *Remarks* or *Gaol Report* section.

³⁴ Eldershaw, *Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania*, p. 19.

³⁵ TAHO CON15/1/2, Indents of female convicts 1831-1853. One woman died only four weeks before the ship arrived and no family information is present on her indent.

³⁶ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 282, evidence of Lieutenant George Arthur.

³⁷ Eldershaw, *Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania*, p. 19.

The indent was used for the allocation of labour as well as providing the basis for the CON40 series. Twenty five of the forty five ships in this study have surviving indents.

Other record sets exist which may label women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land as prostitutes. Lucy Frost used Scottish 'precognitions' for her study of the *Atwick* women and her research has located two more women on the *Atwick* who were identified as prostitutes, but who are not included in this study.³⁸ While examination of the precognitions and trial records of every woman who arrived in the colony during the assignment period may reveal further cases of women who were so labelled, for practical reasons I have limited this study to the five main record sets described above. The possibility that more women were identified as prostitutes in trial and other records persuades me that the overall figure of 30 per cent is a conservative one.

[She] has been a common prostitute of the worst description for the last 6 years³⁹

The word 'prostitute' can be employed for two specific purposes. Firstly, for a woman who behaves in a manner which is contrary to the accepted norms of society. It could apply to her domestic arrangements or her general misbehaviour and could be seen as a subjective or moral judgement in that it was 'accommodating and flexible and could define any woman who transgressed the bourgeois code of morality.'⁴⁰ The second purpose is to identify a woman who plies a trade; a sex worker, an objective meaning which can of course include a moral dimension. According to Tony Henderson, the first time the term 'prostitute' was used in a legal sense, and included in provisions directed specifically at them, was in the wording of the 1822 Vagrancy Act in England. This act provided insights into how a prostitute was defined. It identified all common prostitutes or night-walkers who were found to be wandering in the public streets or highways, and not giving a satisfactory account of themselves.⁴¹ This singled out women who were behaving in a manner which was seen as inappropriate or suspicious and who would

³⁸ Lucy Frost, *Abandoned Women: Scottish Convicts Exiled Beyond the Seas* (Sydney, 2012).

³⁹ TAHO CON40/1/5, Elizabeth Jones (97J) per *Jane* (1833), image 207.

⁴⁰ Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 94-95.

⁴¹ Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London: Prostitution and Control in the Metropolis 1730-1830* (New York, 1999), p. 97; Fergus Linnane, *London The Wicked City: A Thousand Years of Vice in The Capital* (London, 2007), p. 177.

not, or were unable, to justify their behaviour. The wording does not specifically associate the behaviour with a sexual act although it describes the terrain of the prostitute. But the exact definition of a prostitute was never legally described and Nead believes that while the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s were framed to control and regulate the 'common prostitute' there was such uncertainty over the meaning that it could only be sustained by assuming common knowledge.⁴²

An equally nebulous understanding of the word may have operated in the Australian colonies. When James Mudie told the Select Committee on Transportation that: 'I consider them all prostitutes', he was repeating the word 'prostitute' on behalf of colonial masters who attempted to discipline female convicts.⁴³ As such 'prostitute' reflected the frustration and exasperation which a powerful landowning-elite felt, over the conduct of a small but unmanageable and non-compliant section of the community. Mired in ambiguity, discussion on the meaning and use of the word 'prostitute' by historians, has focused mainly on its application as a moral judgement, a form of derision or abuse, and less frequently as an objective reference to a trade or occupation.

William Tait defined a prostitute as

a person who openly delivers herself up to a life of impurity and licentiousness, who is indiscriminate in the selection of her lovers, and who depends for her livelihood upon the proceeds arising from a life of prostitution.⁴⁴

Tait also mentioned the existence of a class which was simultaneously employed in other trades, but nevertheless should equally bear the label 'prostitute'.⁴⁵ Not only did Henry Mayhew accept the word 'prostitute' to represent a means of livelihood (however illegal and parasitic to his mind), but he further refined it into categories. He based his categories on the records of women who had been brought within the 'cognizance' of the London metropolitan police in 1837.⁴⁶ They were: prostitutes well-dressed living in

⁴² Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 101.

⁴³ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 38, evidence of James Mudie Esquire.

⁴⁴ William Tait, *Magdalenism: An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences of Prostitution in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1840 [re-issued 1842]), p. 1, online: <http://www.google.com.au/books?id=7vMDAAAQAAJ> (9 June 2011).

⁴⁵ Tait, *Magdalenism*, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁶ Henry Mayhew, 'The Non-Workers', in Henry Mayhew (ed.), *London Labour and the London Poor – a Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those that Will Work, Those that Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work*, 4 (London, 1967 [1860-1861]), p. 33.

brothels, prostitutes well-dressed walking the streets, and prostitutes who infested ‘low’ neighbourhoods.⁴⁷ Mayhew saw prostitutes as obtaining a living ‘by seducing the more industrious or thrifty to part with a portion of their gains.’⁴⁸ This is a moral definition which allowed that prostitution was a means of support yet implied an absence of industry and thrift. Maria Luddy found that the first mention of prostitution as a trade in the Irish census was in 1841, and while the trade was present long before that time it is telling that it now possessed the legitimacy of official documentation other than that of police records.⁴⁹

Examining the records of women transported to Van Diemen's Land between 1822 and 1843 it is evident that prostitution was recognised as a trade. Women were recorded as ‘prostitute’ in the *Trade* category of gaol lists and returns by their gaolers as they awaited transportation. It was then repeated by the surgeons-superintendent on board the transports. The word next appeared on indents and in the CON40 record series, but when it was transcribed onto the indent and CON40 it no longer appeared in the category of *Trade*. It moved into a different category as a remark or character assessment. It is therefore possible that the original meaning and intention for recording the word ‘prostitute’ has been misinterpreted by subsequent readers.

Thus women on the *Navarino* were identified as ‘prostitute’ in the *Trade* column of the gaol return.⁵⁰ For Elizabeth Hepplewhite and Mary Ann Shepperd ‘prostitute’ was their only trade. By contrast, Caroline Moore was recorded as a ‘Framework knitter & Prostitute’; Sarah Birchell and Ann Findlay were both classed as ‘weaver & prostitute’; Catherine Mc Manus as ‘Spinner & Prostitute’, Margaret Leah a ‘Factory Girl and Prostitute’ and Mary Ann Griffiths as ‘prostitute, can sew’. But the inclusion of ‘prostitute’ as a trade was not sustained within the colony and each of the women had a different trade recorded on their colonial record and no further mention was made of prostitution. This may have been because they were not questioned about past

⁴⁷ Mayhew, ‘The Non-Workers’, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 33.

⁴⁸ Henry Mayhew and Bracebridge Hemyng, ‘The Prostitute Class Generally’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 35.

⁴⁹ Maria Luddy, ‘An Outcast Community: the “wrens” of the Curragh’, *Women's History Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1992), p. 342, online:

<http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/09612029200200014> (14 June 2011).

⁵⁰ ML TP D5 CY 1197, Return of Female Convicts Removed from the General Penitentiary at Millbank to the ‘Navarino’ Convict Ship at Woolwich.

prostitution on arrival. Such information was sometimes entered on the indent and then transcribed to the CON40 record. But it did not appear to pass directly to the CON40 series from the gaol list or return. The following records show how Rebecca Stanton was identified as a prostitute on a document entitled, Return of Female Convicts Removed from the General Penitentiary at Millbank to the ‘Navarino’ Convict Ship at Woolwich, but yet that descriptor failed to reach any of the categories on her CON40 record.⁵¹

Figure 2.1: Return of Female Convicts Removed from the General Penitentiary at Millbank to the ‘Navarino’ Convict Ship at Woolwich

NAME.	AGE.	Married or Single, and Number of Children.	Read or Write.	Trade or Profession.	CONVICTED.	
					When.	Where.
Caroline Ainsworth	18	Single	read	Factory Girl and Prostitute.	3 rd July 1839	Beaufort Prison Yorkshire.
Amelia Payne	24	Single	read	Needlework and Prostitute.	6 Jan 1840	Cent. Gaol. Const.
Rebecca Stanton	25	3 rd	read	Sew'd & Prostitute.	24 Oct 1839	Bath.
Ann Doran	30	Married	read	Servant	6 th Jan 1840	Liverpool

Source: ML TP D5 CY 1197

⁵¹ ML TP D5 CY 1197, Return of Female Convicts Removed from the General Penitentiary at Millbank to the ‘Navarino’ Convict Ship at Woolwich; TAHO CON40/1/10, Rebecca Stanton (423S) per *Navarino* (1841), image 46.

In the gaol lists for women on the *Platina*, ‘prostitute’ was also included as a trade in the same way that ‘dressmaker’ or ‘servant’ were recorded. Jane Toser/Tozer, Susan Featherstone, Rose Milligan/Mulligan and Elizabeth Watkins had the sole trade of ‘prostitute’. Yet no further mention of prostitution occurred on their colonial records. Once again some women’s experience as a prostitute remained undetected on arrival unless they chose to disclose it themselves.

<u>Jane Toser (Tozer) per <i>Platina</i></u> ⁵³	
<u>Gaol list</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	prostitute
<i>Conduct:</i>	Bad convicted before
<u>Ship manifest</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	prostitute
<u>Description list</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	House Servant & nurse maid
<u>Appropriation list</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	House & Nursemaid, wash, iron & plain needle
<u>CON40</u>	
<i>Gaol Report:</i>	Bad convicted before

In Jane Toser’s case, because ‘prostitute’ was entered in the *Trade* category on the gaol list, it was not transferred across to her CON40 record, yet ‘Bad, convicted before’ survived from that gaol list. This could mean that it was not a deliberate omission but one that was dictated by the nature of the form. Thus, for clerical reasons ‘prostitute’ may have been omitted once the women reached the colony.

Mary Jones had the word ‘prostitute’ omitted from her colonial record but must have confessed to being ‘on the town for 10 months’ when she arrived since that detail was not previously on her indent. Rather than ‘prostitute’ her trade became ‘Ho[use] Ser[van]t’ on her description list. The *Gaol Report* section of her CON40 which came indirectly from the original gaol return described her as a ‘quiet woman’. It is also

⁵³ TAHO CON40/1/10, Jane Toser (Tozer) (130T) per *Platina* (1837), image 109; ML TP D4 CY1196, Gaol list and ship manifest for the *Platina*; TAHO CON19/1/14, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Platina*); ML TP 28 CY 1280, Appropriation list for the *Platina*.

notable that ‘prostitute’ was not on the original gaol list from Middlesex suggesting that she volunteered that information during further questioning.

<u>Mary Jones per Jane</u> ⁵⁴	
<u>Gaol list from Middlesex</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	[none recorded]
<u>Gaol return</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	prostitute
<u>Ship manifest</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	prostitute
<u>Indent</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	House servant
<u>CON40</u>	
<i>Gaol Report:</i>	quiet woman
<i>Statement:</i>	on the town 10 months
<u>Description list</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	Ho[use] Ser[van]t

Jesse Thompson was also recorded as a ‘prostitute’ on her gaol return, and she was described in the *Gaol Report* section of her CON40 record as ‘very well behaved’. Her colonial trade became ‘plain cook and housemaid’. Her indent and her CON40 statement bear witness to the fact that she had spent ‘two years on the town’.

<u>Jesse Thompson per Jane</u> ⁵⁵	
<u>Gaol return</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	prostitute
<u>Ship manifest</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	prostitute
<u>Indent</u>	
<i>Comments:</i>	2 years on the town
<u>CON40</u>	
<i>Gaol Report:</i>	very well behaved
<i>Statement:</i>	2 years on the town
<u>Description list</u>	
<i>Trade:</i>	P[lai]n Cook &Ho[use] Maid

⁵⁴ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Jones (101J) per *Jane* (1833), image 209; ML TP D4 CY 1196, Gaol lists, returns and ship manifest for the *Jane*; ML TP Z4-9 CY1241, Indent for the *Jane*; TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Jane*).

⁵⁵ TAHO CON40/1/9, Jesse Thompson (93T) per *Jane* (1833), image 197; ML TP D4 CY 1196, Gaol lists, returns and ship manifest for the *Jane*; ML TP Z4-9 CY 1241, Indent for the *Jane*; TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Jane*).

Henrietta Hall however made no admission to being a prostitute nor to having been ‘on the town’, when she arrived in Van Diemen's Land.

<u>Henrietta Maria Hall per Jane</u> ⁵⁶	
<u>Gaol return</u>	
Trade:	prostitute
<u>Ship manifest</u>	
Trade:	prostitute
<u>Indent</u>	
Trade:	plain cook
<u>Description list</u>	
Trade:	plain cook
<u>CON40</u>	
Gaol Report:	Here before particularly well behaved
Surgeon's Report:	very good

The report which the gaoler gave of each of the above women is positive and expresses no bias or suggestion that a woman who was a prostitute was more badly behaved than other women. Gaolers recorded the term in the same manner that they documented other trades, and not as a character assessment.

The reports compiled by surgeons-superintendent during the voyage also recognised prostitution as a trade, and the journal for the *Nautilus* treated the terms ‘trade’ and ‘occupation’ as synonymous. Surgeon-Superintendent John Stewart recorded ‘prostitute’ as the former occupation for forty of the sixty eight women who sailed with him on the *Nautilus* and who were later identified as prostitutes.⁵⁷ (Figure 2.3 below) The twenty eight remaining women had other trades or no trade recorded by Stewart.⁵⁸ Other *Former Occupations* which he noted were ‘factory’, ‘widow’, ‘servant’, ‘innkeeper’, ‘tramper’, ‘farm servant’, ‘stay-maker’, ‘weaver’, ‘button maker’, ‘furrier’,

⁵⁶ TAHO CON40/1/5, Henrietta Maria Hall (205H) per *Jane* (1833), image 107; ML TP D4 CY 1196, Gaol lists, returns and ship manifest for the *Jane*; ML TP Z4-9 CY 1241, Indent for the *Jane*; TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Jane*).

⁵⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838) Surgeon-Superintendent John G Stewart.

⁵⁸ A ship manifest survives for the *Nautilus* which must have been taken from the gaol lists, which have not survived. Yet on that document women were not recorded as ‘prostitute’: ML TP D4 CY1196, A List of 133 female convicts embarked on board the Ship *Nautilus* for Van Diemen's Land. It is therefore unclear whether the identification came from the gaol lists or the surgeon-superintendent collected that information during the voyage.

‘fish-woman’, ‘nurse’, ‘hawker’, ‘dairy’, ‘coiner’, and ‘kept woman’. Since he noted ‘nil’ and ‘none’ for some women, ‘prostitute’ was not a way of stating that the women had no trade. The inclusion of ‘widow’, ‘married’, ‘kept woman’ and ‘coiner’ suggests that the record he drew up attempted to document their previous means of support.

Figure 2.3: Surgeon's journal for the *Nautilus*

No. 15. Appendix to Surgeons' Instructions.									
List, Articles Consumed Ship, Volcanos,									
Name	Age	Former condition	Present condition	Wounds in front	Disease &c	Dietary		Remarks	
						When	How		
Carl Johnson	44		Disorder?		Yellow	April 19	Asst. Surg.		
Thomas Knight	6		Concussion of Head		Paralysis	May 7	well		
John Savage	4		Lost Brachial		Asphyxia	18th	Asst.		
Henry Hamlin	48		Disorder	9	Paralysis	7 May	well		
Agnes Smith	44		Prost. Bladder		Lachrym	18th	Asst.		
Wm. Smith	13		Prost. Bladder		Immobility	18th	Asst.		
John Hamilton	4		Lost Brachial	9	Paralysis	22nd	well		
Henry Jones	22		Prost. Bladder	11	Asphyxia	23rd	well		
Henry Smith	14		Prost. Bladder	4	Went to Gen. 19	May	well		
Henry Smith	15		Prost. Bladder	7	Asphyxia	21st	well		
Wm. Smith	11		Prost. Bladder	6	Paralysis	7 May	well		
Wm. Smith	26		Prost. Bladder	7	Immobility	13 May	well		
Wm. Smith	28		Prost. Bladder	8	Paralysis	27th	well		
Wm. Smith	24		Prost. Bladder						

The surgeon-superintendent noted Elizabeth Mc Innes from Glasgow on his sick list of 24 April as a prostitute and again as a prostitute on the sick list of 17 May.⁵⁹ She was then listed as a weaver in his case notes of 18 May and once more as a prostitute on the sick list of 7 June.⁶⁰ Likewise Ann Turton was recorded on one visit of 12 May as a prostitute, then ten days later as a button maker.⁶¹ He mentioned that she swore but was not otherwise ill behaved.⁶² It would appear that he too used the term 'prostitute' as a trade and not as a character assessment since he commented favourably on many of the women he so identified. Martha Montgomery's former occupation was recorded as 'prostitute' and she was employed on the ship as a nurse. In that role Stewart described her as 'active and intelligent, kind to the sick and always well behaved'.⁶³ Dorothy

⁵⁹ TAHO CON40/1/6, Elizabeth Mc Innes (53I) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 100.

⁶⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁶¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁶² TAHO CON40/1/10, Ann Turton (139T) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 112.

⁶³ TAHO CON40/1/8, Martha Montgomery (281M) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 20.

Barnes was described as ‘well behaved, good natured and cleanly’.⁶⁴ Jean Cooper was also ‘well behaved, active and well disposed’,⁶⁵ while Mary Ann McLaren was ‘quiet and always well behaved, neat and cleanly’.⁶⁶ On none of these records did their trade as a prostitute prompt an unfavourable report on their character or behaviour.

While the term ‘prostitute’ was understood to be a trade, there is also evidence that it was used in contemporary literature to describe a woman who lived in what some judged to be an unsanctioned relationship. Early in the nineteenth century Patrick Colquhoun estimated that there were 50,000 prostitutes in London among whom he numbered 25,000 ‘low females who cohabit with labourers and others without matrimony.’⁶⁷ The definition was reiterated several decades later by Henry Mayhew during his investigation into prostitution. In his survey of ‘Prostitutes and their Dependents’ Mayhew included ‘Co-habitant prostitutes’, by which he did not mean women involved in commercial prostitution but women in a common-law relationship.⁶⁸ Mayhew argued that a woman who confined her favours to one man might still be a prostitute since prostitution meant ‘putting a woman’s charms to vile uses.’⁶⁹ Lord Hardwicke’s Marriage Act of 1753 was said to contribute to the sharp increase in common-law marriages in the second half of the eighteenth century by rendering it both expensive and inconvenient for the poor to marry.⁷⁰

The Reverend Samuel Marsden applied the label of ‘concubine’ to women who co-habited in New South Wales. His ‘Female Register’ set the standard for categorisation of women and was held up as evidence of widespread immorality within the colony. Marsden did not use the word ‘prostitute’ and it is assumed that ‘concubine’ was meant as a substitute for the term ‘prostitute’. Since the definition of concubine is a ‘woman who co-habits with a man, not being his wife’, then it could be argued that Marsden’s

⁶⁴ TAHO CON40/1/2, Dorothy Barnes/Burns (405B) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 58.

⁶⁵ TAHO CON40/1/2, Jean/Jane Cooper (350C) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 172.

⁶⁶ TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Ann McLaren (182L) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 217.

⁶⁷ Peter Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis: Containing a Detail of the Various Crimes and Misdemeanors by which Public and Private Property and Security are, at present, injured and endangered: and Suggesting Remedies for their Prevention* (London, 1806), p. 340, online: http://books.google.com.au/books?pg=PA1&dq=Patrick+Colquhoun&id=l6kqAAAAMAJ&as_brr=1 (13 June 2010).

⁶⁸ Mayhew, ‘Introduction and Classification’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 27.

⁶⁹ Mayhew and Bracebridge, ‘The Prostitute Class Generally’, Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 36.

⁷⁰ Clark, ‘Whores and Gossips’, p. 233.

classification was accurate for a large number of women in New South Wales at the time.⁷¹

Evangelical ship's surgeon Thomas Reid assiduously strove to prevent the prostitution of female convicts. He specifically meant 'the state of prostitution in which it is represented the female convicts, during the passage to New South Wales, have been permitted to live with the officers and seamen of the ships in which they were embarked.'⁷² This sounds like co-habitation rather than being paid for sex by individual clients although some women may have received such remuneration during the voyage. The formation of similar short term relationships has been blamed for creating the reputation of the *Lady Juliana* as a 'floating brothel'.⁷³

In the debate on female convict morality, it is beneficial to re-examine the meaning of words. By removing a narrow twentieth-century definition of the term 'prostitute' and allowing it to exist in a broader context, it may no longer be a matter of false accusations. The word 'prostitute' may have implied a range of meanings which were understood and employed and thus may have had broader meanings which have now become archaic. Accepting that the opinions of Mayhew and Colquhoun were not unique among their contemporaries and that they shared a consensus on the definition of the word, then convict records may be correct to classify female convicts in common-law relationships as prostitutes. It is a use, and indeed a meaning, which we would not countenance today, but officials may have been employing common usage of the word 'prostitute' and it could follow that the designated women accepted that definition. Sturma drew a distinction between prostitution and co-habitation and showed that middle-class values were imposed upon working-class patterns. But by their definition and writing for peers, they may have considered the word to be appropriate. Sturma

⁷¹ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 7th edition (Oxford, 1981).

⁷² Thomas Reid, *Two Voyages to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, With a Description of the Present Condition of that Interesting Colony: including Facts and Observations relative to the State and Management of Convicts of both Sexes also Reflections on Seduction and its General Consequences* (London, 1822), pp. 279-280, online:

<http://archive.org/stream/twovoyagestonew00reidgoog#page/n30/mode/2up> (13 October 2009).

⁷³ Siân Rees, *The Floating Brothel: The extraordinary story of the Lady Julian and its cargo of female convicts bound for Botany Bay* (Sydney, 2001).

suggested that most of the women described by the Molesworth Committee as abandoned prostitutes were really engaged in co-habitation.⁷⁴

That definition may have been operating in the convict records to identify women who erred against middle-class standards in their domestic arrangements. However it is difficult to confirm that usage, and there are only three records which would suggest that interpretation. Sarah Gates' records may demonstrate the use of the word 'prostitute' to denote co-habitation. She was transported on the *Sovereign* for the theft of a breast pin. Sarah was twenty eight years old and noted as 'married'. On a document entitled, 'A List of 81 Female Convicts embarked on the Ship *Sovereign*', which must have come from the gaol list, Sarah was noted as 'prostitute'.⁷⁵ A further list claimed that she was 'living in prostitution 9 years'.⁷⁶ Her indent states that, 'I lived 9 years with Geo Potter - a law writer - I had four children by him.'⁷⁷ The word 'prostitute' survived in the *Gaol Report* section of her CON40 record. In Sarah's case the gaoler may have been defining a common-law relationship as prostitution. The repetition of '9 years' would indicate as much. Or did he know Sarah and know that she also earned her living through prostitution? She may have been a prostitute during the nine years when she lived with George Potter, bore him four children and was his common-law wife. The circumstances of her arrest at 10 o'clock at night in company with another woman and allegedly detaining their victim on his way home would appear to be the *modus operandi* of a prostitute.⁷⁸ Or Sarah may have been a victim of that same wave of middle-class morality which Anna Clark identified as casting suspicion on the character of any woman found in the public streets.⁷⁹

There was no indication of prostitution on Maria Smith's CON40 record but she stated that she had lived with Mr. Benmore a surgeon at Greenwich for three years.⁸⁰ The surgeon-superintendent on the *Nautilus* described her in his case notes on 23 April as

⁷⁴ Michael Sturma, 'Eye of the Beholder: The Stereotype of Women Convicts 1788-1852', *Labour History*, 34 (1978), p. 7.

⁷⁵ ML TP 22 CY 1274, A List of 81 Female Convicts embarked on the Ship *Sovereign*.

⁷⁶ ML TP 21 CY 1273, Ship manifest for the *Sovereign*.

⁷⁷ ML TP D3 CY 1195, Indent for the *Sovereign*.

⁷⁸ TAHO CON40/1/3, Sarah Gates (70G) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 245; ML TP 22 CY 1274, A List of 81 Female Convicts embarked on the Ship *Sovereign*; ML TP CY 1273, Manifest for the *Sovereign*; ML TP D3 CY 1195, Indent for the *Sovereign*.

⁷⁹ Clark, 'Whores and Gossips', p. 235.

⁸⁰ TAHO CON40/1/10, Maria Smith (347S) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 20.

‘Prostitute’. On the sick list for 23 April she was a ‘Kept Woman’, and on the same sick list the following month he recorded ‘Widow’.⁸¹ All three may have been concomitant. Charlotte Lloyd stated when she arrived that she had been ‘living with another man for nine months’, whilst on her indent it appeared as, ‘Living with a person after she had left her husband.’⁸² No mention was made of prostitution on any of her records except the original gaol list, where she was labelled as a ‘prostitute’.⁸³ Either the evidence of her past trade was excluded from her colonial records, or her co-habitation was defined by her gaoler as prostitution. The three cases above are the only evidence that the label of ‘prostitute’ may have been applied to women who were in common-law relationships.

On the *Mary Anne* only one woman was recorded as a prostitute prior to coming into the care of Surgeon-Superintendent James Hall.⁸⁴ She was Mary Davis who must have been identified by her gaoler since it was transcribed onto her CON40 record as part of the *Gaol Report*. Nine other women were subsequently identified as prostitutes by the surgeon-superintendent and perhaps their behaviour with the crew prompted Mr Hall to so label them. Three were accused of committing prostitution on board, and he described the others simply as ‘prostitute’. They may have been paid by multiple partners during the voyage. Hall reported that Ann Williams was pregnant by one of the crew. Elizabeth Boucher had confessed to living with a man prior to transportation, so Hall may have classed her previous co-habitation as prostitution. Elizabeth Smith however, was given a favourable report by Hall who explained that she had left her respectable husband and family to co-habit with a bad man but now repented.⁸⁵ Hall did not describe her as a prostitute. Other women on board were classed as loose, idle, and sly but not as prostitutes.

While some nineteenth-century commentators associated the word ‘prostitute’ with a trade or a domestic arrangement, others saw it as a useful appellation for a woman’s irreverent or unconventional behaviour. Tony Henderson found that ‘streetwalking prostitutes’ were almost always referred to within the London policing system as

⁸¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁸² TAHO CON40/1/5, Charlotte Lloyd (124L) per *Jane* (1833), image 342.

⁸³ ML TP D4 CY 1196, Gaol lists, gaol returns and ship manifest (*Jane*).

⁸⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822) Surgeon-Superintendent James Hall.

⁸⁵ TAHO CON 40/1/9, Elizabeth Smith (51S) per *Mary Anne* (1822), image 26.

‘disorderly women’. He also found that if prostitutes were residing within a house it became known as a ‘disorderly house’.⁸⁶ That image of disorder, noise, laughter and lack of control is recognisably the domain of the prostitute.⁸⁷ By following a document trail it is possible to find examples which suggest that the word ‘prostitute’ was used to describe a woman who earned her living through sex work. It is also possible to follow the same trail to discover women whose co-habitation may have caused officials to classify them as prostitutes. It is more difficult to find women who were called prostitutes because of their unruly or irreverent behaviour. Opinion holds that such misconduct earned female convicts their reputation as abandoned prostitutes. But no records offered evidence that women had been labelled as prostitutes for disorderly behaviour.

One record which provides no clue as to the origin of the label ‘prostitute’ is that of Phillis Perry.

<u>Phillis Perry per <i>Lady of the Lake</i></u> ⁸⁸	
<u>Gaol return</u>	
<i>Crime:</i>	shoplifting
<i>Trade:</i>	Nailer
<i>Character:</i>	Very Bad
<u>Indent</u>	[no mention of prostitution]
<u>CON40</u>	
<i>Gaol Report:</i>	convicted before, very bad character, prostitute
<i>Stated this offence:</i>	[no mention of prostitution]

Was ‘prostitute’ inadvertently added by the clerk who amalgamated all the records in Van Diemen's Land? Or was it a clerical error and a reminder that records are fallible? It could possibly have been on another record set which no longer survives.

The overwhelming majority of records for women examined for this thesis do not contain entries in which women identified themselves with the word ‘prostitute’. Of the thousands of statements made by women arriving in Van Diemen's Land in the

⁸⁶ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 63.

⁸⁷ See chapter 8 for a discussion on disorderly houses in Van Diemen's Land.

⁸⁸ TAHO CON40/1/7, Phillis Perry (68P) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 196; ML TP D3 CY 1195, List of female convicts under sentence of transportation in the gaol at Worcester. This document was signed by the gaol surgeon-superintendent and the gaol keeper.

assignment period there are only two occasions when the word ‘prostitute’ may be part of a women’s statement on her CON40 record to describe her former situation.⁸⁹ They are the records of Catherine Donovan per *Sir Charles Forbes*, and Rebecca Wheeler per *Lady of the Lake*. In one case the wording at the end of what is believed to be her statement reads, ‘last a prostitute’, and on the other it states simply, ‘prostitute’. But the attribution is not conclusive as it may have been the words of the clerk. The word ‘prostitute’ was, however, frequently used by gaolers and surgeons-superintendent, and then subsequently transferred into the CON40 series by clerks in Van Diemen's Land. By that process 26 per cent of women in this study had the word ‘prostitute’ placed onto one of their records.⁹⁰

As contemporary literature showed, there was no agreement over the definition of a prostitute. That ambiguity could explain why women arriving in Van Diemen's Land rejected the specific word. While all women in this study have a reference to prostitution on their record, in only 26 per cent of cases did that reference take the form of the word ‘prostitute’. Some women may have avoided using it because they understood it to denote one who survived solely by selling her body. Thus a reticence to use the word could have been because women involved casually in prostitution did not consider themselves to be ‘prostitutes’.⁹¹

The origin of information recorded on convict records is not always clear but it seems that 79 per cent of the entries which used the word ‘prostitute’ were from the British gaol lists. A further 12 per cent were recorded by the surgeon-superintendent but they could also have come via the gaol list rather than from his own inquiries or observations. Nine per cent can be found on the indent but again that could have been duplicated from earlier documentation. While the word ‘prostitute’ did not appear to be favoured by the women themselves, some stated that they were ‘an unfortunate’.

⁸⁹ TAHO CON40/1/3, Catherine Donovan (68D) per *Sir Charles Forbes* (1827), image 40; TAHO CON40/1/9, Rebecca Wheeler (130W) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 287.

⁹⁰ A further 11 per cent also had the words ‘unfortunate’ or ‘on the town’ as well as ‘prostitute’ on their record.

⁹¹ Clark, ‘Whores and Gossips’, p. 236.

I knew she was an unfortunate woman, but thought her honest⁹²

The *1811 Dictionary of The Vulgar Tongue* explains that an unfortunate woman is a prostitute, and that the term ‘unfortunate’ was preferred by the virtuous and compassionate of their own sex.⁹³ When Eliza Webb’s prosecutor made the statement, ‘I knew her to be an unfortunate woman, but thought her honest’, she may have revealed a subtle nuance which the word ‘unfortunate’ conferred upon the prostitute. Hannah may have been showing a reticence to judge another or it could have meant that an ‘unfortunate’ was a more genteel class of prostitute or a more recent entrant to the trade. Although Eliza was known to be a prostitute, Hannah Vollar had trusted her enough to make her a partner in her dressmaking business. In this instance the word may indeed have been used by a more virtuous and compassionate member of her sex. A broader reading of Hannah Vollar’s statement could of course reveal that in 1822 prostitution and dishonesty were not considered to be synonymous. Tony Henderson found that in the middle of the eighteenth century prostitutes appearing at the Old Bailey described themselves as ‘misfortunate’ or ‘unfortunate’ women.⁹⁴ He also described how in 1801 Jacob and Elizabeth Levy, keepers of a house of ill-fame, were charged with striking a watchman in St. Paul’s churchyard as he was taking up ‘unfortunate girls’.⁹⁵ The mention of ‘girls’ could indicate a short time in the trade. And this is further supported by James Miller who observed that, ‘By and by the unfortunate grows a hardened prostitute.’⁹⁶ He seemed to imply a short period in the trade which could qualify the ‘unfortunate’ as one not yet fully beyond redemption. The case is strengthened by a reference in the poor law records of St. Martin Vintry in which Elizabeth Lively, inmate of a house of ill-fame in Stoke Newington, was described as ‘unfortunate for the last two months’.⁹⁷ This short period of prostitution may have qualified her as an ‘unfortunate’ in 1818.

⁹² *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London’s Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913* online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/images.jsp?doc=182201090055>, 9 January 1822, p. 147 (18 July 2010).

⁹³ *1811 Dictionary of The Vulgar Tongue: A Dictionary of Buckish Slang, University Wit, and Pickpocket Eloquence* (Bibliophile Books, Adelaide 1981 [1788]), no pagination alphabetically listed.

⁹⁴ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 189, citing the Old Bailey Proceedings, 1790.

⁹⁵ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 112.

⁹⁶ James Miller, *Prostitution Considered in Relation to its Cause and Cure* (Edinburgh 1859 [Original in the British Library, reproduced as part of the Nineteenth Century Microfiche Programme]), p. 9.

⁹⁷ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 189.

In 1854 George Drysdale published *Physical, Sexual and Natural Religion*, which he revised in 1861 and dedicated to 'The Poor and Suffering'.⁹⁸ Drysdale made frequent reference to prostitutes as 'unfortunates', and the tenor of his discourse was to heap gratitude rather than scorn upon prostitutes who he praised as providing a valuable treatment for society's ills. He suggested that the same society should 'raise as much as possible the unfortunate girls, who have suffered so deeply, as martyrs to the sexual passions.'⁹⁹ Records from the Richmond Hospital which treated prostitutes with venereal disease during the mid nineteenth century cited a doctor who had 'admitted women of the town into my wards pressed by the entreaties of the unfortunates themselves.'¹⁰⁰

Rather than being age-specific, the term 'unfortunate' may have hinted that some misfortune for which she was not culpable had befallen a woman and this could resonate with the image of the 'fallen woman'. It could suggest that she was initially respectable, or at the very least, 'acceptable' but had taken a tumble. The expression 'fallen woman' does not occur in the convict records and that absence along with the inference of initial respectability, could place the term as class specific – middle class as opposed to working class.¹⁰¹ While the link with prostitution seems clear in those contemporary examples, one instance was found where it was applied to a man. Colonist Henry Button visited the site of the earlier convict settlement of Macquarie Harbour and described the graffiti on the walls as 'the work of unfortunates.'¹⁰² Whether he was associating the men with male prostitution and 'unnatural practices' is unclear.

The word 'unfortunate' may have been initiated by the virtuous and compassionate of their own sex, but by 1826 it was being used by the reputedly less virtuous women who

⁹⁸ George Drysdale, *The Elements of Social Science; or, Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion* (London, 1854 [1861]), online: <http://www.google.com.au/books?id=KG17KV1ezZMC> (6 January 2010).

⁹⁹ Drysdale, *The Elements of Social Science*, pp. 243, 266, 268, 270. 270.

¹⁰⁰ Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society: 1800-1940* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 131-132.

¹⁰¹ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 95.

¹⁰² Henry Button, *Flotsam and Jetsam: floating fragments of life in England and Tasmania: an autobiographical sketch with an outline of the introduction of responsible government* (Launceston, 1909), p. 230. Button was a colonist in the 1850s who later published his recollections of colonial life.

arrived in Van Diemen's Land and the clerks who recorded their details.¹⁰³ Twenty eight women in this study were described as 'unfortunate' and in twenty two cases it was corroborated by the mention of 'on the town' or 'prostitute' on their records. Six records used only the word 'unfortunate'.¹⁰⁴ It has been found in the indents and the women's statements in the CON40 series, but never in the gaol lists. If we accept that women were questioned on arrival and that their statements were faithfully recorded onto their CON40 record, then some women who had been labelled as prostitutes on the *America*, *Borneo*, *Harmony*, *Hector*, and *Hydery* considered themselves also to be 'unfortunate'. Indents for women on the *Eliza*, *Frances Charlotte*, *Jane* and *Providence* described women as 'unfortunate', but whether that word was uttered in a statement by the women or by a compassionate clerk is not clear. Gaolers it seems were never so compassionate.

The absence of the word 'unfortunate' from gaol records highlights one obstacle confronting the researcher. While all records in this study were created under the auspices of the British Empire, they were however the product of men who interpreted their paperwork in varying ways and may have held differing views on the definition of particular words. And as is evident in the appropriation lists for the allocation of labour, motivations in collecting the data also influenced the framing of any questions. When Edward Higgs and Bridget Hill examined nineteenth-century British occupational census records, they found that the preoccupations of those framing the questions could significantly influence the resulting data.¹⁰⁵ The response reflected the framing of the question which was in turn a reflection of the specific interests and motivations of the Superintendent of Statistics.¹⁰⁶ The census also changed over time when different data was required to service the differing needs and priorities of the community.¹⁰⁷ The narrow period of time during which the word 'unfortunate' was placed on women's records could indicate current popularity for the word rather than any subtle nuances of meaning.

¹⁰³ The use of the term 'unfortunates' occurred on records which were created between the years 1826 and 1835.

¹⁰⁴ The single reference occurs in the records of Mary Daniel per *America*; Catherine Marsden per *Eliza*; Maria Tremlett per *Eliza*; Harriet Williams per *Harmony* who claimed, 'I was last unfortunate.'; Jane Torr per *Eliza*; and Mary Meggott per *Hydery*.

¹⁰⁵ Edward Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal*, 23 (1987), pp. 70-71; Bridget Hill, 'Women, Work and the Census: a Problem for Historians of Women', *History Workshop Journal*, 35 (1993), p. 85.

¹⁰⁶ Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work', pp. 70-71.

¹⁰⁷ Hill, 'Women, Work and the Census', p. 85.

On some female convict records which use the word ‘unfortunate’, the words ‘prostitute’ and ‘on the town’ are also present. Seven records have all three terms to describe the same woman. Nine have ‘prostitute’ and ‘unfortunate’, and twenty have ‘on the town’ and ‘unfortunate’. The wording on the following four records suggests that the three terms were interchangeable.

Elizabeth Paton per America¹⁰⁸

Indent on the Town 18 months

CON40 18 months unfortunate

Mary Mason per Borneo¹⁰⁹

Indent a prostitute 3 years

CON40 an unfortunate girl 3 years

Jane Ditchfield per Hydery¹¹⁰

Indent on the Town 6 months

CON40: 6 months unfortunate

Ann Wood per Frances Charlotte¹¹¹

Indent an unfortunate since my husband transported

CON40 on the Town since my husband transported

¹⁰⁸ TAHO CON40/1/7, Elizabeth Paton (79P) per *America* (1831), image 202; ML TP 11 CY 1242, Indent for the *America*.

¹⁰⁹ TAHO CON40/1/7, Mary Mason (74M) per *Borneo* (1828), image 39; ML TP 23 CY 1275, Indent for the *Borneo*.

¹¹⁰ TAHO CON40/1/3, Jane Ditchfield (138D) per *Hydery* (1832), image 75; TAHO CON15/1/2, Indents of female convicts 1831-1853 (*Hydery*).

¹¹¹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Ann Wood (217W) per *Frances Charlotte* (1833), image 331; ML TP Z4-9 CY 1241, Indent for the *Frances Charlotte*.

In every case where the woman's gaol list survives it states simply, 'prostitute'. Two women on the *Eliza* were described on their indent as 'unfortunate' and no reference was made to prostitution on their later colonial records.¹¹² Another 'unfortunate' on board was noted on the gaol list as a 'common prostitute'.¹¹³ Catherine Marsden was described on her indent as 'unfortunate' and 'on the town 3 months' in the same sentence.¹¹⁴ It seems that officials who compiled the records considered that the words 'unfortunate', 'on the town', and 'prostitute' to be interchangeable.

Jane Torr was 'an unfortunate two months' but her background has been hidden from previous researchers through a record imaging mishap. A system of organised prostitution was detected at the Launceston Hospital in 1831 which embroiled the surveyor Thomas Scott and the assistant surgeon Dr James Spence.¹¹⁵ Jane Torr was one of the women implicated in the racket.¹¹⁶ It has been argued that Jane turned to prostitution only when she was in the colony, thus giving credence to the argument that transportation turned women into prostitutes.¹¹⁷ Jane Torr's story has been used in that context but in fact she was described as an 'unfortunate 2 months' prior to her conviction.¹¹⁸ This error has arisen because the pages of the indent for the *Eliza* were wrongly aligned when they were photographed as part of the Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP) and transferred to microfilm which now comprise part of the Tasmanian

¹¹² TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Harris (137H) per *Eliza* (1830), image 73; ML TP 25 CY 1277, Indent for the *Eliza*; TAHO CON40/1/9, Jane Torr (59T) per *Eliza* (1830), image 180; ML TP 25 CY 1277, Indent for the *Eliza*; TAHO CON40/1/9, Maria Tremlett (58T) per *Eliza* (1830), image 179; ML TP 25 CY 1277, Indent for the *Eliza*.

¹¹³ TAHO CON40/1/7, Ann Nott (28N) per *Eliza* (1830), image 126; ML TP 25 CY 1277, Indent for the *Eliza*.

¹¹⁴ TAHO CON40/1/7, Catherine Marsden (107M) per *Eliza* (1830), image 56; ML TP 25 CY 1277, Indent for the *Eliza*.

¹¹⁵ TAHO GO33/1/8, 'Inquiry into Prostitution at the Launceston General Hospital 1831', pp. 649-655, evidence of John Thompson, Ronald Gunn, and P Welsh.

¹¹⁶ TAHO CON40/1/9, Jane Torr (59T) per *Eliza* (1830), image 180.

¹¹⁷ Deidre Beddoe, *Welsh Convict Women: A Study of women transported from Wales to Australia, 1787-1852* (Barry [Wales], 1979), p. 134; Kay Daniels, *Convict Women* (Crow's Nest [New South Wales], 1998), p. 203; Kay Daniels, 'Prostitution in Tasmania during the transition from penal settlement to 'civilized' society', in Kay Daniels (ed.), *So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History* (Sydney, 1984), p. 19; Raelene Frances, *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution* (Sydney, 2007), pp. 9, 10.

¹¹⁸ Jane Torr's record on which she is credited with: 'stealing a Gown. Once 3 months for Vagrancy again one month for Vagrancy again a week for leaving my place', belongs to Sarah Bree. Jane Torr stole wearing apparel, and served three months for stealing silver spoons. She was also an 'unfortunate' for two months, which, since it is clear that 'unfortunate' meant 'prostitute' means that she was a sex worker prior to transportation.

Papers (TP).¹¹⁹ Each woman's entry covers a double page and the unbound pages have at some time fallen out of sequence. The result is that the women's background information has been incorrectly attributed in the indent. Investigating multiple record sets of all women on the *Eliza* for this study has exposed the mistake. It is not a ship which has been widely examined, but Jane Torr's involvement in organised prostitution has elevated her story above those of her shipmates which went unremarked.

Times is altered, sir, since I come on the town¹²⁰

According to the *1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, 'To be on the town is to live by prostitution. A woman of the Town is a Prostitute.'¹²¹ In eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature the substitution of the expression 'on the town' for 'prostitute' is commonplace. The early compiler of statistics John Fielding surveyed bawdy houses in 1758 and asked their inmates how long they had been 'upon the town'.¹²² The meaning endured when a century later Bracebridge Hemyng interviewed an aging prostitute who told him that 'Times is altered, sir, since I come on the town.'¹²³ But confusion can arise when the term is appropriated to describe the public presence of women who engaged in commercial activity outside their domestic sphere. Such is the case in Sweet and Lane's book, *Women in Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England 'On the Town'*.¹²⁴ Sweet and Lane explored the phenomenon of women on the streets, but not for the purpose of prostitution. Nor should the term be confused with a man or woman who in times of economic distress was said to be 'on the parish'. Men were never described as 'on the town'.

In Van Diemen's Land in the early 1840s Reverend Ewing wrote of a young girl who wanted to be a prostitute, 'having repeatedly seen girls who she knew to be on the town

¹¹⁹ The AJCP began in 1945 as an agreement between the National Library of Australia and the State Library of New South Wales to copy material relating to Australia and the Pacific held in repositories in the UK. Filming began in 1948, concentrated on material in to Public Record Office (PRO now The National Archives) for the first ten years and then moved to include material from the British Library, the National Libraries of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, university libraries, museums, learned societies, business archives, county and city record offices, missionary societies and private homes. Over 10,000 reels were filmed over the life of the project. Source: TAHO 2010.

¹²⁰ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 240.

¹²¹ *1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, no pagination alphabetically listed.

¹²² Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 22.

¹²³ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 240.

¹²⁴ Rosemary Sweet & Penelope Lane (eds.), *Women in Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England 'On the Town'* (Aldershot [Hampshire, 2003]).

well dressed.’¹²⁵ The expression ‘on the town’ arrived in Van Diemen's Land on the women's indents, and then passed into the CON40 series. It has been suggested that ‘on the town’ could be another term for homeless or a vagrant, but no evidence exists for that association in the convict records. Mary Maxwell demonstrated laudable enterprise when she stated, ‘I was last employed in a Cotton Mill’, then added, ‘on the Town at nights when work was over.’¹²⁶ This does not describe a homeless vagrant. Rather it confirms the casual nature of the activity for some women. Elizabeth Coutts stated, ‘2 or 3 times away from my father's house but not regularly on the Town’, which hints at a means of support.¹²⁷ When Jane Bricknell replied, ‘got my living on the Town’, it too indicated a source of income, not a mode of living rough.¹²⁸ Answers such as, ‘I was never on the town’, suggest that sometimes the question may have been quite specific as in, ‘Have you ever been on the town?’¹²⁹

Further clues to the meaning of the term can also be found in other denials. Many women on the *Eliza* refuted the suggestion. Hannah Forward was noted as having ‘Lived with a man 8 years. Never on the town.’¹³⁰ This once again reinforces the notion of a means of support, and even hints at a defence of her domestic arrangements. Hannah's protests were successful because nowhere was she recorded as a prostitute. Nor was Elizabeth Dale identified as a prostitute, but her indent stated, ‘never on the Town, she has a child on Board which she had by another man since her Husband's death.’¹³¹

Mary Brown, Rebecca Smith, and Catharine Parrott each denied being on the town, for their denials also appeared in the remarks column on their respective indents.¹³² But why was ‘never on the town’ recorded on just a few records instead of the record of every woman who was not ‘on the town’? What differentiated the few who apparently

¹²⁵ TAHO CSO22/1/50, ‘Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841- 43’, p. 253, evidence of Reverend Ewing.

¹²⁶ TAHO CON40/1/7, Mary Maxwell (96M) per *Harmony* (1829), image 50.

¹²⁷ TAHO CON40/1/2, Elizabeth Coutts (496C) per *Emma Eugenia* (1842), image 221.

¹²⁸ TAHO CON40/1/1, Jane Bricknell (101B) per *Providence* (1826), image 115.

¹²⁹ See women on the *Jane*.

¹³⁰ TAHO CON40/1/3, Hannah Forward (73F) per *Eliza* (1830), image 177; ML TP 25 CY1277, Indent for the *Eliza*. Hannah was therefore not identified as a prostitute.

¹³¹ TAHO CON40/1/3, Elizabeth Dale (107D) per *Eliza* (1830), image 60; ML TP 25 CY 1277, Indent for the *Eliza*.

¹³² TAHO CON40/1/1, Mary Brown (164) per *Eliza* (1830), image 146; TAHO CON40/1/9, Rebecca Smith (158S) per *Eliza* (1830), image 79; TAHO CON40/1/7, Catherine Parrott (71P) per *Eliza* (1830), image 198; ML TP 25 CY 1277, Indent for the *Eliza*.

needed it affirmed? And why for those women on the *Eliza*, was the denial only on their indent and not on their CON40 record? Josiah Spode would have most likely interviewed them on arrival and unlike previous interviewers he chose not to record their denials if such were made.¹³³ Perhaps as it had been already documented he saw no advantage in wasting further time and ink.

Another who had her dissent recorded was Elizabeth Dayley who had arrived the previous year on the *Harmony* and was declared to be a prostitute by her gaoler in London.¹³⁴ The earlier mention may be why she was re-questioned. In Van Diemen's Land she stated, 'I was not on the town.' This time the Principal Superintendent of Convicts was James Gordon and he did record her denial, possibly because of the earlier entry.

Frances Clark's records from the *America* are an interesting study. Her indent said that she 'denies being on the Town'. The *Gaol Report* category of her CON40 record said that she was 'not known at Newgate before', but added that she was a prostitute, which is consistent with the duplication of the word prostitute from the gaol list although that document has not survived. However on her CON40 it says, 'denies being a prostitute' which suggests that an official chose 'prostitute' on this occasion in preference to 'on the town'. For whatever reason, it was part of a denial and again shows a woman who contested the labels 'prostitute' and 'on the town'.¹³⁵ She may have initially claimed to be a prostitute then later withdrew the statement, or the information may have been on her trial record. The indents for the *America* contain many denials, both of being 'on the town' and about prior convictions.

The *Gaol Report* section on Eleanor Johnston's CON40 record reads, 'not known before. No doubt but that she has been on the town.'¹³⁶ This judgement must have appeared on the gaol list and her gaoler may have made the assumption because she lacked any other visible means of support. The surgeon-superintendent of the *Mary Anne* considered her to be of 'Retired habits, modest, sober, cleanly, very moral, at all

¹³³ Josiah Spode was the Principal Superintendent of Convicts at the time of the arrival of the *Eliza* in February 1830.

¹³⁴ TAHO CON40/1/3, Elizabeth Dayley (93D) per *Harmony* (1829), image 53.

¹³⁵ TAHO CON40/1/1, Frances Clark (160C) per *America* (1831), image 314; ML TP 11 CY 1242, Indent for the *America*.

¹³⁶ TAHO CON40/1/5, Eleanor Johnson (16J) (stated her real name as Emily MacDonald) per *Mary Anne* (1822), image 168.

times well behaved, and seemingly worthy of high favour.’¹³⁷ This is praise indeed from a man who was described by Charles Bateson as a ‘zealous, meddlesome and litigious individual.’¹³⁸

The statement of ‘on the town’ is present on 85 per cent of female convict records in this study, either alone or in combination with the other two indicators of prostitution. On 73 per cent of records it is the only reference to prostitution, and in 90 per cent of records the women have also volunteered the length of time they spent on the town. It varied from one week to fourteen years. The length of time has been converted to months for analysis and the mean was 26.5 months and the mode 24 months. For many women the length of time is repeated on a second record set. Given that the identification occurs as part of what we accept to be the woman’s statement, either on her indent or her CON40 record (and frequently both), and given also that she knew that her history was already on file, it seems logical that these details were indeed volunteered by the women and that they were correct. The information on the length of time gives further support to its veracity.

The rate of use of each of the three terms across different record groups reinforces the fact that women preferred to use the expression ‘on the town’ to ‘prostitute’ when describing themselves. The background information about the women which was placed onto the CON40 records and the indents is believed to be the prisoner’s own statement. Thus 98.9 per cent of statements on conduct records and 89.5 per cent on indents use the term ‘on the town’. (Table 2.1 below)

¹³⁷ According to Phillip Tardif it is not clear whether Eleanor Johnson disembarked at Hobart Town. He suggests that she was originally listed for Hobart Town but was then sent on to Sydney: Phillip Tardif, *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls, Convict Women in Van Diemen's Land 1803-1829* (North Ryde [New South Wales], 1990), p. 547.

¹³⁸ Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships 1787-1868* (Artarmon [New South Wales], 1974), p. 225.

Table 2.1: Frequency of use of terms to denote prostitution by percentage

	No of references to prostitution	Prostitute	Unfortunate	On the town	Total
Conduct record	1108	0.3	0.8	98.9	100
Indent	845	8.8	1.8	89.5	100
Manifest	23	100	0	0	100
Gaol report	337	84.3	0	15.7	100
Surgeon's report	21	100	0	0	100

Source: TAHO CON40/1; TAHO CON15/1; PRO AJCP Adm. 101; ML TP Z4-9, 11, 21-25, 30, D3-5

A cross tabulation of 'prostitute', 'on the town' and 'unfortunate' indicates how many women were repeatedly identified using the three terms. (Table 2:2 below)

Table 2.2: Cross tabulation of use of terms to denote prostitution by percentage

	Prostitute (463)	Unfortunate (28)	On the town (1505)
Prostitute	X	2%	42%
Unfortunate	32%	X	79%
On the town	13%	1%	X

Source: TAHO CON40/1; TAHO CON15/1; PRO AJCP Adm. 101; ML TP Z4-9, 11, 21-25, 30, D3-5

Since contemporary usage both in Britain and Van Diemen's Land confirmed the meaning of the expression, as did corroborating evidence from many of the women who volunteered information about their lifestyle and means of support, it is apparent that the expression, 'on the town' referred to sex work. The same process can be followed to confirm the meaning of 'unfortunate', particularly when it occurs in conjunction with 'on the town'. The term 'prostitute' when put through the same logical process could also be understood to describe a sex worker, but for three women it may have been used to describe their co-habitation and not their status as sex workers. The use of the label 'prostitute' presented the least robust identification. Women who were labelled only by their gaoler in Britain, and who were therefore identified by the single word of 'prostitute' on one record represent 8 per cent of the total sample, that is, 151 women. These women would appear to present the least persuasive evidence for the accuracy of the identification. They therefore demanded a closer investigation of their backgrounds

and the motivations for the gaolers in recording their trade as ‘prostitute’. Eighty eight of the 151 women have trial records and of those, fifty or 57 per cent revealed conclusive evidence that the prisoner was engaged in prostitution when she was arrested. Ten more women or a further 11 per cent were arrested under circumstances which strongly indicated that they were involved in sex work. Thirty two percent or the remaining twenty eight women had insufficient evidence in their trial records to make that judgement. Such doubt is not however apparent in the use of ‘on the town’ and ‘unfortunate’. The evidence of contemporary writers and the ways in which the terms were used within the convict records, provide compelling evidence that ‘unfortunate’, ‘on the town’, and with judicious examination ‘prostitute’, were placed on women’s records to specifically document their involvement in sex work.

The fact that three terms were used to denote the same practice makes it possible to review the way information was transferred from one record set to another and the creation of colonial documents. On some ships it seems apparent that women were questioned about past behaviour and on other ships the information may have been transferred from the indent or the ship manifest to the CON40 record. The *Eliza* has clear evidence of an exact repetition of the indent information onto the CON40 which could mean that it was copied across or that interrogators meticulously confirmed their existing intelligence. Conversely, records for the *Borneo* contain dissimilar information indicating that it was not copied from the indent to the CON40 record. The indents for some ships contained considerably more detailed information than was to be found on the CON40 records. On others there is no doubt that the women were questioned on arrival, and that statements were truthful to the extent that they revealed new information and occasionally incriminated themselves more fully than in earlier documents.¹³⁹ The process of documentation may have varied according to the current administration, circumstances of the ship’s arrival or time constraints. A comparison of the women’s statements on their indent and CON40 record can at times clarify their circumstances and at other times present a totally different interpretation of the facts.

¹³⁹ This was the opinion of Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur and is confirmed in the records of Ann Edwards and Sarah Smith per *Providence* who were tried for robbing a man of 25 sovereigns and were together transported. But both women confessed on arrival to stealing 27 sovereigns.

When the term ‘prostitute’ occurs in the category of *Gaol Report* on a CON40 record it seems that it was originally registered as the trade for the woman on her gaol list. Later generations have read the records of women arriving in Van Diemen's Land and taken the word ‘prostitute’ to be a character assessment. This does not appear to have been the intention in their pre-colonial records. It is also evident that if some women had not confessed to having been ‘on the town’ on arrival, there would be no colonial record classifying them as a sex worker. When it became obsolete in the *Trade* section it was frequently dropped from the woman’s record. This confirms that as the women edged closer to their colonial life, the priority was their labour potential. Prostitution was not the occupation which interested colonial authorities.

A comparison of records has highlighted how much richer the story becomes when multiple record sets are available. The surgeons’ journals, for example, expand those few words in the *Surgeon’s Report* of the CON40 series. Since it is evident that for some ships the mention of ‘prostitute’ occurred only in the original gaol lists or returns, it is possible that ships for which no gaol records survive could yield higher numbers of women who were labelled as prostitutes. For this reason the number of women identified as ‘prostitutes’, ‘unfortunates’ or as having been ‘on the town’ in this study is almost certainly an undercount.

Evidence would suggest that the word ‘prostitute’ was not used indiscriminately in convict records as a term of derision. It may have been a form of abuse in contemporary literature, and even in the streets, but there is no indication that the men who compiled the convict records used the term as abuse. Three records show that it may have been used to describe women who co-habited, and that may have been a valid usage if it was a contemporary definition. In most cases appears to have been an accurate description of a trade.

The convict record system was neither standardised nor logical and presents challenges for historians who seek statistical answers. The abundance of information does however, enable historians to formulate hypotheses and draw conclusions about the penal system. Yet it should be borne in mind that the questions and responses which prompted the generation of these records were designed for a very different purpose to

that which they are now employed.¹⁴⁰ The information which the Convict Department sought was specific to the aims of its administration, and responses upon which statistics are now based and conclusions are drawn, may have had a different meaning to that which we now attach. Thus judgements about the definitions of words must carry that caveat. In other words it is not only the 'absences' from records which must be accommodated, but also those 'presences' must be judiciously interpreted. It has however been possible to locate the presence of 30 per cent of women who engaged in prostitution prior to their transportation. And the records which labelled them as prostitutes at the beginning of their servitude also provide the means to construct a picture of those women. In so doing it is possible to assess any characteristics which separated them from the non-prostitute population of women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land.

Who is this woman?

Since the mid twentieth century much work has been done to describe the women who were transported to the Australian colonies. Their age, marital status, types of crimes, place of trial and occupations, are just some of the characteristics which have been examined in an attempt to understand the female convict. Women like Matilda Allgood and Sarah Gates whose records bear the label of prostitute, can be subjected to the same tests to discover which characteristics they shared with the non-prostitute population, and which placed them apart.

When Deborah Oxley compared the age distribution of female convicts who arrived in New South Wales against that of Irish and English women she found that female convicts were overwhelmingly aged between 15 and 30. Seventy per cent of transported women fell into that age group compared with 35 per cent of Irish and 28 per cent of English women as recorded by the 1841 census.¹⁴¹ Of the 1,779 women in this study who were identified as prostitutes 1,758 had their age recorded. One would expect those women to be concentrated within the younger age range. In fact 92.5 per cent were

¹⁴⁰ Hill, 'Women, Work and the Census', p. 85.

¹⁴¹ Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The forced migration of women to Australia* (Cambridge, 1996), p.110.

between the ages of 15 and 30, and a further breakdown revealed that 68 per cent of those fell into the 20 to 29 age group.¹⁴² (Table 2.3 below)

Table 2.3: **Age distribution of women identified as prostitutes who arrived in Van Diemen's Land**

Age range	Number	%
0-14	0	0
15-19	430	24.5
20-24	843	48
25-29	352	20
30-34	96	5.5
35-39	26	1.5
40-44	7	0.4
45-49	2	0.1
50+	2	0.1
	1,758	100

Source: TAHO CON19 (1828-1843)

A comparison between Oxley's figures for the general female convict population and that of women identified as prostitutes can be seen in Appendix C.¹⁴³ Lloyd Robson found that the mean age for all female convicts was 27 years.¹⁴⁴ The mean age of women identified as prostitutes was 22.67 years and the mode was 20 years. Again the findings suggest that those women labelled as prostitutes were on average younger than transported women as a whole.

Quantitative methods were also used in the mid twentieth-century to examine the conjugal status of convict women. Lloyd Robson's sample revealed that 50 per cent of women were single, and 18 per cent married. Eight per cent were widowed but Robson warned that the figure could 'reflect lying' as the women hoped to remarry within the colonies.¹⁴⁵ He also suggested that hesitations and contradictions by women concerning their marital status could have been due to the fact that they had lived with men without being legally married, which in Robson's opinion was evidence of a 'looseness of

¹⁴² Table 2.3: Age distribution of women identified as prostitutes who arrived in Van Diemen's Land.

¹⁴³ Appendix C: Age distribution of female convict population and women identified as prostitutes.

¹⁴⁴ Lloyd Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia: An Enquiry into the Origin and Character of the Convicts transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1787-1852* (Melbourne, 1976), p. 75.

¹⁴⁵ Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, p. 75.

morality’.¹⁴⁶ Deborah Oxley’s sample revealed that 62 per cent of convict women were single, 23.6 per cent were married and 14.3 per cent were widows.¹⁴⁷ In this study of women identified as prostitutes, almost 80 per cent stated that they were single. Once again it is not surprising given the younger demographic. The category ‘contradictory response’ was adopted to signify the women who had ‘married’ placed on one of their records, and ‘single’ on another. (Table 2.4 below)

Table 2.4: **Marital status of female convicts and women identified as prostitutes by percentage**

	Robson	Oxley	Leppard
Single	50	62	79.5
Married	18	23.6	8.9
Widow	8	14.3	5.3
Contradictory response	–	–	2.1
Common-law	–	–	2.6
No response	24	–	1.6

Source: Robson, *Convict Settlers*, p. 188; Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 255; TAHO CON15, TAHO CON19, TAHO CON40

The fact that almost 80 per cent of women identified as prostitutes were single, and that they represent a younger demographic, suggests that they were less likely to be mothers. Of the 1,779 women it appears that only 89 brought children with them or gave birth during the voyage which equates to a mere 5 per cent. But by including the women who stated that they had children at home 10 per cent may have been mothers.¹⁴⁸ The mean age of the women with children was 26 years.¹⁴⁹ Oxley found that 10.5 per cent of single women, 67.0 of married and 71.9 per cent of widows had children, which gave an average of 32.7, much higher than for women with a pre-colonial history of prostitution.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁷ Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 255.

¹⁴⁸ 102 children arrived with their mothers, 23 had children at home and the whereabouts of 109 is uncertain although they are more likely to have remained at home. That means that 183 of the 1779 identified as prostitutes were mothers.

¹⁴⁹ For more detailed literature on convict children who arrived with their parents see Female Factory Research Group: <http://www.femaleconvicts.org.au/> (28 March 2012); Dianne Snowden, “‘A Most Humane Regulation’: Free Children transported with convict parents’, *THRA Papers & Proceedings*, vol. 58 no.1 (April, 2011), pp.33–41; Lucy Frost, *Abandoned Women: Scottish Convicts Exiled Beyond the Seas* (Sydney, 2012), particularly chapters 6 and 7.

¹⁵⁰ Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 255.

An examination of the places where women were tried confirms that social commentators were correct in their claims that London possessed a high proportion of both criminals and prostitutes. Combining the numbers of women whose records stated that they had been tried in Middlesex, London, the Old Bailey, and the Central Criminal Court yielded 30.6 per cent.¹⁵¹ This is in marked contrast to Lloyd Robson's sample which found that 20 per cent of women came from those areas. Robson's sample differs slightly from this one because it also covered the probation period during which time a higher proportion of Irish women arrived in Van Diemen's Land. Combining the figures for the London area with counties which contained large urban centres such as Lancashire, Yorkshire, Midlothian, Lanarkshire, Surrey and Warwickshire reveals that 64.2 per cent of women identified as prostitutes were tried in those regions. Women identified as prostitutes therefore came predominantly from urban areas. Liverpool in Lancashire, for example, provided a clientele of sailors while the industrialised centres in Yorkshire had large mobile populations of factory workers. (Table 2.5 below)

Table 2.5: Places of trial for female convicts

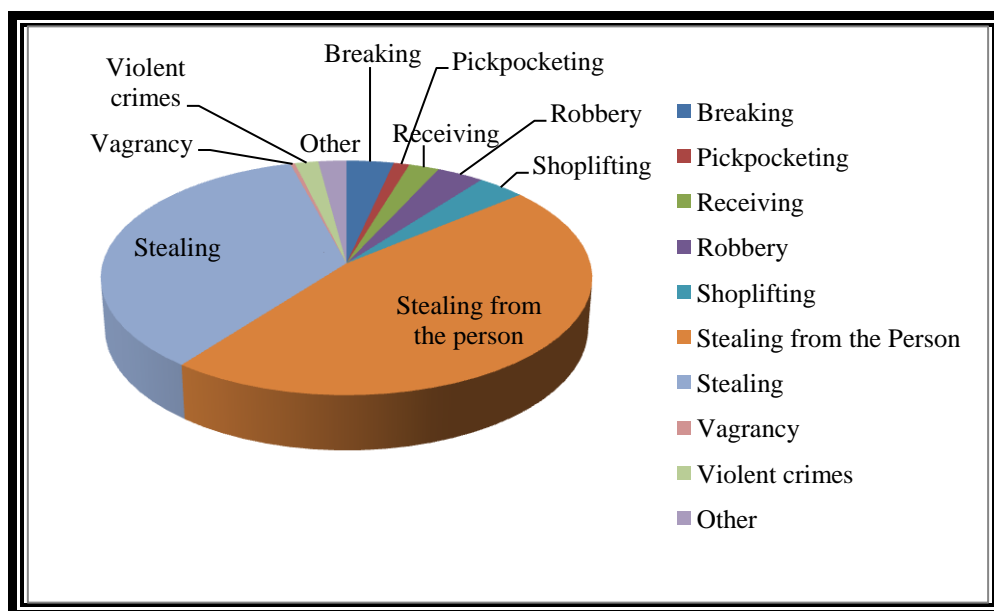
Leppard Sample			Robson Sample	
Place	Nos	%	Nos	%
London/Middlesex	545	30.6	257	20
Lancashire	244	13.7	99	8
Yorkshire	91	5.1	30	3
Midlothian	89	5	29	2.3
Lanarkshire	67	3.8	44	3.5
Surrey	54	3	24	1.9
Warwickshire	54	3	25	2
Ireland	150	8.4	431	34.5
Wales	16	0.9	13	1
Other English	411	23.2	259	20.8
Other Scottish	57	3.2	35	2.8
Unknown	1	0.1	2	0.2
	1,779	100	1,248	100

Source: Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, p. 186 (1,248 records); Leppard: TAHO CON40 (1,779 records)

¹⁵¹ Table 2.5: Places of trial for female convicts. For the complete list of counties and a comparison with Robson's figures see Appendix D: Counties where female convicts were tried.

A comparative analysis of the crimes for which women labelled as prostitutes and those not so identified has not been included in this study. Such an exercise could constitute yet another thesis. Therefore what follows is purely an analysis of the crimes for which women in this cohort were transported. Not surprisingly, women identified as prostitutes were transported largely for stealing items. Using the sample of 1,779 women it is apparent that 81.9 per cent of women were specifically transported for either 'stealing' (35.4 per cent) or 'stealing from the person' (46.5 per cent). Yet pick pocketing, a crime which is attributed to prostitutes, accounted for only 1.2 per cent of convictions. This is probably due to the terminology used on the conduct records, by which 'stealing from the person' may have included cases which could alternatively have been defined as pick pocketing. (Figure 2.4 below)

Figure 2.4: **Categories of crime for which female convicts identified as prostitutes were transported**



Source: TAHO CON40/1

What is most notable is that 'stealing from the person' is particularly high and if combined with pick pocketing it suggests that women in this cohort were prepared to deal in person with their victim. This feature of the crime supports the case for the

perpetrators being prostitutes who were typically dealing with drunk or sleeping clients. The women may alternatively have waylaid their victim in the street at night and robbed him. Prostitutes were more likely to be in that environment, and possibly adept at confronting men, physically touching them and using persuasive or delaying tactics to distract and thus rob them. The victims were also more likely to be drunk.

Some women's records listed the stolen items, so by using Deborah Oxley's stolen goods classification it was possible to make some further observations about the women's motivations and behaviour.¹⁵² (Table 2.6 below)

Table 2.6: **Items stolen by women identified as prostitutes**

Clothes	Fabric	Food/animals	H/hold items	Jewellery	Money	Other	
322	62	43	72	246	637	16	1398
23%	4%	3%	5%	18%	46%	1%	100%

Source: TAHO CON40/1

Forty six per cent of all thefts were money which suggests prostitutes relieving their clients of cash or detaining men at night in the street or a pub and robbing them. Clothing accounted for 23 per cent of thefts, some of which was shop lifted, but a large proportion was stolen from fellow lodgers or the women's male clients. Within the category of jewellery, watches were the most frequently stolen items and were again removed from victims in the much the same manner as was the cash.

Most women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land had a trade or skills listed on their record. The specific wording of their occupational details seemed dependant on the interrogator and the particular framing of his questions, which was in turn governed by the circumstances of the interview and its purpose. When Richard Eaton, the Gaoler at Derby County Gaol, wrote in the *Trade* column that Sarah King had 'worked at a cotton factory', his intention was to elicit very different information to that of Surgeon-Superintendent William Evans who noted on Sarah's indent, 'Dairy maid, cook plain dinner, wash and iron, In farmers service, understands cheese making'.¹⁵³ It may have

¹⁵² D Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 247, appendix 3.

¹⁵³ ML TP CY1195, List of convicts under sentence of transportation in Derby County Gaol (May 1829); ML TP 24 CY1276, Indent for the *Lady of the Lake*.

been Josiah Spode who then abbreviated Sarah's skills to, 'Farm Servant.'¹⁵⁴ Yet Sarah's recommendation to Captain Clarke at Clyde assured him that she was a 'Dairymaid, understands cheese making.'¹⁵⁵ For many women a trade or occupation appeared on their record, or alternatively a list of tasks which the prisoner could perform was recorded. In some cases both forms of information were present.¹⁵⁶ Mary Ann Woods' record noted that she could 'wash, iron and cook' which may have been her reply to the question 'what can you do?' That question may have followed a negative response to an inquiry about whether she possessed a specific trade. This was in marked contrast to the Derby gaoler who was almost certainly interested in the manner in which Sarah King had last supported herself, a very different question.

An assessment of the occupational background and trades further adds to the profile of women who were identified as prostitutes. Description lists for thirteen ships have been used for this test.¹⁵⁷ They have been chosen in preference to appropriation lists because description lists more often recorded a trade rather than a list of skills. While appropriation lists are essential to examine distribution, it is likely that they give a less satisfactory account of the previous employment, listing instead a summary of the skills which were in demand within the colony.¹⁵⁸ This study presents a comparative view of the stated trades of all 1,846 women from thirteen ships.

Deborah Oxley adopted the Armstrong social-skill classification to place convict women into five classes.¹⁵⁹ Oxley was not completely happy with the nomenclature of the fifth class, 'Unskilled', since she believed that very few jobs were totally deficient of skills. In particular she was sceptical of the decision to place 'allworker' within the 'Unskilled' category since it could describe the sole servant in a household who was therefore responsible for a wide range of tasks. There are some difficulties in using the Armstrong classification for this study. Within Class 3, 'Skilled occupations' Armstrong included the trades of 'milliner' and 'embroiderer' as well as 'housemaid',

¹⁵⁴ TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts (*Lady of the Lake*)

¹⁵⁵ ML TP 28 CY 1280, Appropriation list for the *Lady of the Lake*.

¹⁵⁶ Such was the case for many women on the *Providence*. See for example Margaret Hart per *Providence* who is described on her appropriation list as a 'servant of all work' who could also wash and cook.

¹⁵⁷ Appendix E: List of ships used to examine women's trades. That is 1,846 women or 595 identified as prostitutes and 1251 non-prostitutes.

¹⁵⁸ Appropriation lists often recorded a different trade to that which appeared on the indent.

¹⁵⁹ Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 248.

the trade which was placed onto the records of the vast majority of female convicts in this study. Into Class 4 ‘Semi-skilled’ he placed ‘ladies maid’ and ‘governess’, along with ‘servant’. The differences between the groupings of ‘semi’ and ‘skilled’ does not seem to logically accommodate the terms which were used to indicate trades, within the convict records which were examined for this study.

For example the placing of ‘housemaid’ into Class 3 ‘Skilled’ and then ‘governess’ into Class 4 ‘Semi-skilled’ is not altogether satisfactory. Nor is the relegation of ‘housemaid’ to Class 3 yet ‘servant’ to Class 4. The distribution of those trades within the description lists does not appear to support such a division. The recording of the trades housemaid/house servant, servant of all work, and servant, are too arbitrary within the description lists of the women examined. The categories which make up the Armstrong social-skill classification may have been meaningful in York in 1841 and 1851 (which is the source from which Armstrong took his guide) but how meaningful they were in the hands of Van Diemen's Land officials trying to place convict servants is less certain. It is possible that Armstrong's categories have greater relevance when used with the convict indents than with the description lists. For the purposes of this study I have created a different classification system.¹⁶⁰ The trades which were recorded on the women's description lists have been placed into an alternative construction of five broad categories to provide an overview of how the two groups of prostitutes and non-prostitutes were represented. It is immediately apparent that most women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land were domestic workers. (Table 2:7 below)

Table 2.7: **Broad trade categories for women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land**

Code	Categories	Prostitute %	Non-prostitute %
A	Specialist domestic	3.2	10.3
B	Domestic	83.4	68.9
C	Needlework	4.7	7.5
D	Country servants	5.5	8.9
E	Factory or industry	2	1.2
F	None or child	1.2	3.2
		100	100

Source: TAHO CON19/1

¹⁶⁰ Appendix F: Breakdown of broad trade categories.

The percentage of prostitutes and non-prostitutes in selected occupations was next examined again using those trades which were identified by colonial officials. The service categories of housemaid/house servant, servant and servant of all work, were kept separate for the initial count but then later combined for an overview of that occupational field.¹⁶¹ The trades of dressmaker and stay maker were grouped together. Nurse girl, nursemaid and children's maid were also treated as one occupational group. Officials who created the description list distinguished between 'cook' and 'plain cook' and while the distinction is not explained, 'cook' may have indicated a higher degree of expertise and experience, compared with 'plain cook' which could indicate skills gleaned within the family. However the aim of this study was not to analyse the subtleties of trades and skills as Deborah Oxley has done, but to compare any significant differences in the recorded trades of the two groups of prostitute and non-prostitute.¹⁶² For the same reason it was only the first or primary trade on the description list which was used for this analysis.

In comparing the two groups the differences in the percentages of prostitutes and non-prostitutes in most trade categories is not large. Prostitutes scored higher than non-prostitutes in the categories of nursemaid or nurse girl, kitchen maid and weaver. A younger age group may explain the higher percentage of prostitutes who claimed the trade of 'nurse girl' or 'nurse maid'. It may have been a trade for younger women and that too could reflect a younger cohort. They may have acquired the skills within their own family. The higher proportion of weavers among prostitutes may indicate the urban demographic which seems to be confirmed in the figures for the places in which women were tried. Farm servants and dairy maids who represent a greater proportion of non-prostitutes could conversely be attributed to their rural origins. Laundresses and washerwomen as with dressmakers, milliners and cooks could be more highly represented among non-prostitutes because they were trades largely associated with

¹⁶¹ Appendix G: Trades of women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land 1829-1842.

¹⁶² Oxley, *Convict Maids*; Deborah Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 85-97; Deborah Oxley, 'Packing her (Economic) Bags: Convict Women Workers', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 26 (1994-95), pp. 57-76. Deborah Oxley has counted all the skill sets so that it is not one skill per person but one woman may have four skills listed. I have however listed the first trade which appears on the description list for each woman and not the skills which they possessed. This is a comparative look at how prostitutes compared with non-prostitutes.

older women. They had undergone an apprenticeship and period of employment in their particular calling and were less likely to be found within the younger age group.¹⁶³

Within the domestic servant categories the difference between the two groups of women is most significant. By combining the servant categories (excluding farm servants), 71.1 per cent of women designated as prostitutes fell within that occupational group.¹⁶⁴ (Table 2.8 below)

Table 2.8: Female convict servants who arrived in Van Diemen's Land by percentage

Category	Prostitute	Non-prostitute
House maid/servant	49.4	36.8
Servant of all work	7.1	3.6
Servant	14.6	12.9
Total	71.1	53.3

Source: TAHO CON19/1

There is no evidence that the three terms which signify servant had different meanings when placed on the description lists. The fact that one term was used exclusively on one ship, and not on another ship suggests that the men compiling the lists did not acknowledge any nuances nor did they have a shared definition of the three categories. They were seeking a generic term to describe a domestic servant.

Among the women not identified as prostitutes, house maids/house servants again made up the largest proportion of women's trades, at 36.8 per cent and when combined with servant and servant of all work and it yielded 53.3 per cent.¹⁶⁵ The higher percentage of prostitutes who were servants may again correlate with a younger work force possessed of skills which although valuable in servants, may have been gained within their own household and not necessarily as the result of an apprenticeship. The higher incidence of prostitutes within the servant categories could also reflect a cohort which possessed

¹⁶³ Washerwomen did not register a percentage difference but there were 6 among the non-prostitute population compared with no prostitutes claiming that trade.

¹⁶⁴ Raelene Frances found that 67 per cent of women transported from England who were prostitutes had the trade of servant. Raelene Frances, *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution* (Sydney, 2007), p. 10.

¹⁶⁵ The same dominance of women in these categories is to be found in the work of Deborah Oxley. Oxley's examination of the indents of women arriving in New South Wales during the same period found that using the categories of general servant, housemaid, and allworker, 49 per cent of women fell into those categories. Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in Nicholas, *Convict Workers*, pp. 91-92.

fewer specific skills and by default fell into the service category. While not dismissing the highly specific skill sets of some servants, it is also an employment option which could have been entered more readily and its members were more disposable. Hence women in this category may have more often faced unemployment and turned to prostitution. The *Lady of the Lake* (1829) was the only ship to record a higher rate of non-prostitute servants (combining three categories of servant).¹⁶⁶ The difference was however only 2 per cent.¹⁶⁷

A higher percentage of non-prostitutes had no trade recorded on their description list. That was 2.7 per cent compared with less than 1 per cent for prostitutes. That did not necessarily mean that they had no skills, but rather that they were not interviewed. The main reason for that failure was due to illness. Women who were ill on arrival were transferred to the Colonial Hospital or Female Factory without undergoing questioning.

The illogical nature of the convict record system can be demonstrated by examining the trades of women on the *Navarino* where conflicting information is present across different record sets. This could reflect differing answers from the women at different times, or it could be the result of colonial attempts to fit certain information into categories or generic forms to suit a particular purpose. It could also have been due to leading questioning by the interrogator. The discrepancies could finally have been a deliberate subterfuge on the part of authorities to alter the woman's skills to answer the requirements of a potential master. If so it could explain allegations by masters that some female servants were ignorant of the skills which were entered on their appropriation list.

Elizabeth Joy was described on her indent as a twine spinner and common servant. On her description list she was a servant, yet on her CON40 it revealed that she had not been in service and was incapable of doing housework. She was therefore returned to the assignable class in the Female House of Correction where her record expressed the

¹⁶⁶ The ship with the greatest disparity between female servants was the *Frances Charlotte* which arrived in January 1833. In all, 77 per cent of prostitutes on that ship fell within the servant categories compared with only 36 per cent of non-prostitutes.

¹⁶⁷ Kirsty Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance; the Convict Women of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839.', A thesis submitted for the Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh (1995), p.134. Reid found that 40 per cent of women on the *Lady of the Lake* had combined skills of domestic service and farm labour.

hope that work would be found for her, possibly, 'in town'.¹⁶⁸ Either Elizabeth was particularly obstructive or she had been injudiciously assigned. Many entries on the appropriation lists stated 'house servant', whereas no such reference appeared on the women's description lists or their gaol returns. For example Sarah Birchell and Ann Findlay's gaol reports listed them both as 'weaver & prostitute', yet within the colony they were both recorded as house servants. Many other such examples exist which suggest that there may have been a great demand for house servants in 1841, but clearly there was no official need for prostitutes. In a similar manner it appeared that in 1828 the colony was in need of laundresses, because many women from the *Mermaid* whose trade was listed on their gaol returns as 'prostitute' were later listed as laundresses.¹⁶⁹

Conclusion

The reference to prostitution which was placed on women's records was in most cases an accurate description of her trade. There is no evidence that it was used as a form of abuse or as a character assessment. For some women the label of prostitute did not survive the sea voyage. Even when it did survive, it was omitted from the colonial records which registered their labour potential. That omission was not due to sensitivity or distaste but rather to expediency. Women who had in the past turned to prostitution for a living were expected to resurrect their alternative vocational skills or quickly acquire new ones. They reverted to the housemaids, nurse girls and laundry maids who had become superfluous to Britain's labour needs, but were now highly sought after in Van Diemen's Land. Robson believed that some of the women's trades were invented on the spot.¹⁷⁰ If any distortion or alteration did occur it was more likely to have been the work of officials who sought to fit women into vacant positions.

The profile of the 1,779 women who were identified as prostitutes is revealing. They were more likely to be tried in the London region or a large urban area such as Liverpool or Edinburgh. Nearly half were between the age of 20 and 24, they were predominantly unmarried and a maximum of 10 per cent had borne children. They also

¹⁶⁸ TAHO CON40/1/5, Elizabeth Joy (63J) per *Eliza* (1830), image 190.

¹⁶⁹ ML TP 21 CY 1273, List of women on the *Mermaid*.

¹⁷⁰ Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, p. 84.

possessed fewer specialist skills than other transported women, being more heavily concentrated into the 'disposable' domestic occupations. Even here they were disproportionately drawn from the less skilled end of the service sector. While acknowledging that some domestic servants acquired complex skills during their working life and were much prized, women could, however, enter service without an apprenticeship or lengthy training. They could also be easily replaced. In short, statistical analysis of occupations, ages and places of trial supports the conclusions gleaned from the study of the terms, 'prostitute', 'unfortunate', and 'on the town', that the women so identified did indeed derive an income from sex work. The evidence also suggests that the women identified as prostitutes differed in some respects from the majority of convict women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land during the assignment period. But those differences were predictable in that they were significantly younger and thus differences were to be expected in the categories of marital status and motherhood, occupation, and skill levels.

CHAPTER 3: WHO CREATES PROSTITUTION?

PATHWAYS TO PROSTITUTION

Introduction: Eliza Smith's story

At six pence a time for the room Eliza Smith's customers provided a steady income for the landlady of number eight West Street.¹ But this morning Eliza failed to emerge from the shabby room where, for a few more pence she usually stayed to sleep off her night's work.² The city missionaries would have recognised two categories which predisposed Eliza Smith to a life of prostitution. She was a single twenty one year old whose upbringing had schooled her for such a future. She explained that, 'I was brought up by Mr. Harris a pig merchant from childhood, he got me with child. I have been on the Town 3 years.'³ This early misfortune was compounded by her entry into the precarious trades of staymaker and needlewoman. When she pleaded guilty to theft, her trial revealed a web of relationships. The alleged victim was James Carter a 'pig jobber' who claimed to have known Eliza for a number of years. This acquaintanceship was probably through his association with her guardian-seducer Mr. Harris. After sharing a drink in *The George Public House*, Carter paid sixpence for the room in West Street, to which he and Eliza retired. He removed his purse and placed it into his hat whereupon Eliza grabbed the money and fled. She was later apprehended with Sarah Gates, and the two women spent the night in the watchhouse. Not only did Sarah Gates' four children

¹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Eliza Smith (120S) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 60; *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913* online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18270405-172-verdict953&div=t18270405-172#highlight>, 5 April 1827, pp. 77-78 (26 February 2011).

² As Judith Walkowitz found, lodging-house keepers were often older women who rented the lodging house and re-let rooms to prostitutes to support their own families. Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, class and the state* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 200.

³ ML TP CY1195, Indent for the *Sovereign*.

awake to find their mother missing on that April morning, but Eliza's landlady may have missed her tenant and those few extra pence.⁴

As a young child, Eliza had been orphaned or abandoned, and that absence of a protective family unit was the first hint of her moral danger. Pregnancy affirmed that threat and her chosen trade in needlework was subject to seasonal and fashion fluctuations. Prostitution was her means of survival. Eliza's story was complex. She volunteered the requisite detail about her offence in her statement, and then by relating what Ian Duffield described as a high-density micro-narrative, she added more to the standard information. And by so doing she 'wrenched the official eye from [her] pitiful offences to a far greater wrong'.⁵ Occasionally that 'far greater wrong' reached the pages of social commentary when observers studied the causes of prostitution. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth century the spectre of prostitution increasingly alarmed social commentators and moral reformers who used books, pamphlets, lectures and manifestos to examine the topic. Self-appointed experts combined statistics, science, medicine and social theory, while investigative journalists and city missionaries interviewed prostitutes or according to Lynda Nead, 'interrogated witnesses', and then circulated their findings as privileged and authentic sources of truth.⁶ The publishers of such 'truths' addressed an educated middle-class audience whose enthusiasm for the subject bore similarities to the working-class appetite for the Newgate calendar or convict narratives. Within their findings lurked a hint of entertainment and even titillation.⁷

These men documented their own version of the conditions which caused a woman to turn to prostitution and the society which created those conditions. Such causes can be examined using contemporary works from 1806 to 1859.⁸ These works predate the

⁴ TAHO CON40/1/3, Sarah Gates (70G) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 245.

⁵ Ian Duffield, "'Stated This Offence': high-density convict micro-narratives", in Lucy Frost & Hamish Maxwell-Stewart (eds.), *Chain Letters: narrating convict lives* (South Carlton, 2001), p. 120.

⁶ Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 151-152. Nead was referring specifically to the methods of Henry Mayhew and Bracebridge Hemyng.

⁷ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 150.

⁸ Peter Colquhoun, *Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis; Containing a Detail of the Various Crimes and Misdemeanours by which Public and Private Property and Security are, at present, injured and endangered: and Suggesting Remedies for their Prevention* (London, 1806 [7th Edition]), online: http://books.google.com.au/books?pg=PA1&dq=Patrick+Colquhoun&id=l6kqAAAAMAAJ&as_brr=1 (13 June 2010); William Tait, *Magdalenism, An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences of*

Contagious Diseases Legislation which marked a significant change in societal attitudes towards prostitution and the treatment of prostitutes. In the first half of the nineteenth century sensational and emotionally-charged vignettes were used as vehicles with which to explore the causes of prostitution. Conversations with the women confirmed that the common ingredient which influenced a woman's entry into prostitution was poverty. The circumstances closely mirrored those which drove women to crime, but prostitution elicited a far more complex response. To some observers that choice was seen less as an economic imperative than evidence of a moral deficiency.

A collection of grievances which reflected the debates of a society which was undergoing rapid change and social upheaval became inextricably linked with fears about prostitution. It was felt that diminishing respect for institutions such as the church, the social *status quo*, and indeed all forms of authority, had created an environment in which prostitution could flourish. Inadequate housing, ignorance and a lack of education were conditions which were believed to assist its spread. Unprecedented urban expansion from the 1820s led to the uneven distribution of a growing and at the same time mobile population. Migrating rural workers strained the already overcrowded accommodation in the manufacturing north of England, and centres like Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool mirrored London's expanding population. The hurriedly built back-to-backs for factory workers afforded 'literally no room for decency', so that

Prostitution in Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1840 [re-issued 1842]), online: http://books.google.com.au/books?id=7vMDAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false (2 March 2010); William Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation of Female Prostitution in London, Leeds, and Rochdale, and Especially in the City of Glasgow; with Remarks on the Cause, Extent, Results, and Remedy of the Evil* (Glasgow, 1843 [National Library of Australia: Goldsmiths Kress Library of Economic Literature, Printed books 1801-1850]); Reverend Ralph Wardlaw, *Lectures on Female Prostitution, Its Nature, Extent, Effects, Guilt, Causes and Remedy* (Glasgow, 1843), online: <http://www.google.com.au/books?id=-sZQcDdno7QC>; Bracebridge Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London' in Henry Mayhew (ed.), *London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Those That Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work*, vol. 4 (London, 1967 [1860-1861]); George Drysdale, *The Elements of Social Science; or, Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion* (London, 1854 [1861]), online: <http://www.google.com.au/books?id=KG17KV1ezZMC>; William Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects, In London and other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of Its Attendant Evils* (London, 1857), online: <http://books.google.com.au/books?id=XJsrHfQqL5sC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> (17 October 2009); James Miller, *Prostitution Considered in Relation to its Cause and Cure* (Edinburgh, 1859 [Original in the British Library, reproduced as part of the Nineteenth Century Microfiche Programme]).

women were often 'reared immodest'.⁹ It was expected that women who were accustomed to so little privacy, would find the step to prostitution of no consequence.

Poor education was also thought to render a woman more vulnerable to a life of prostitution because it followed that she was less able to resist the temptation of sensual indulgence.¹⁰ Commentators deplored the tendency for the lower ranks to marry young and assume the burden of a family long before they were economically secure. Poverty then forced the young woman into prostitution to support her expanding family. This was further impacted by an excess of clients from the upper ranks who injudiciously delayed marriage.¹¹ The Reverend Ralph Wardlaw believed that such marital prevarication by upper-class males was a significant cause of prostitution.¹² Thus a happy solution would have been for the working class to delay marriage and upper-class males to hasten it.

Women who succumbed to false promises of marriage were also considered to be prime candidates for prostitution. Once 'fallen' and 'ruined' they had no recourse but to the streets. This path to prostitution was recognised by the commissioners who inquired into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland. They found that unmarried mothers frequently resorted to prostitution.¹³ The well documented fall from the arms of a trusted lover to the degradation of the streets was an oft quoted cautionary tale. In 1785 the *Times* reported that 'nine out of ten streetwalkers' were the daughters of half-pay officers and poor clergymen.¹⁴ The article highlighted a distinction between those from the very low or vicious sections of the community, and those who began as a kept

⁹ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, pp. 7- 8; Jennie Kittingham, 'Country work girls in nineteenth -century England', in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Village Life and Labour* (London, 1975), p. 128 citing the *Saturday Review*, 3 April 1858.

¹⁰ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, p. 9.

¹¹ Judith and Daniel Walkowitz claimed that contrary to previously held scholarship, working-class prostitutes were more likely to cater for a working-class clientele rather than a middle or upper-class client.

¹² Wardlaw, *Lectures on Female Prostitution*, pp. 95-96.

¹³ Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society 1800-1940* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 44, citing the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, 1835, Appendix A, pp. 57, 67, 69.

¹⁴ Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London: Prostitution and Control in the Metropolis, 1730-1830* (Harlow, 1999), p. 188; see also 'Prostitution', *Westminster Review*, vol. 53 (1850), in *Prostitution in the Victorian Age: debates on the issue from 19th century critical journals* (Introduction by Keith Nield) (Westmead, 1973), p.466.

mistress and were then forced upon the town. They were to be pitied as yielding to desires simply through weak generosity and ‘a positive love of self sacrifice’.¹⁵

According to Nead, commentators like William Tait saw class specific causes of prostitution.¹⁶ For governesses who became prostitutes, their ‘fall’ could be the result of seduction whereas for ‘sewing girls’, the cause was to be found within a specific and distinct working-class morality. The sewing girl’s inherent looseness of character ensured that no deception was needed to lead her astray; she already possessed an innately licentious quality. The governess, however, could retain a respectable femininity and be pitied as the innocent victim of seduction. Middle-class commentators were unable to see beyond hegemonic notions of class, gender and sexuality.¹⁷

Vanity and a love of dress were eschewed by the pious and godly, and slipped into the eclectic collection of causes of prostitution. The prostitute was said to need gay and costly trappings, until the desire became an absolute and absorbing passion ‘for the gratification of which every other consideration [was] forced to yield.’¹⁸ Some observers listed carriages, jewels, and a luxurious table as the aforesaid trappings.¹⁹ Bracebridge Hemyng found a love of dress and display was the cause of lax morality amongst operatives.²⁰ James Miller agreed that such desires were the indirect cause of sending young women into prostitution, and he warned of the ultimate cost wherein ‘They will have fine dress to bedeck the body; and they sacrifice the body – aye and the soul too – to obtain that dress!’²¹

A casual attitude towards chastity was another characteristic which could lead a woman into prostitution. Hemyng sensed no shame among working-class women who turned to prostitution, when he found that being unchaste was not always a reproach among the lower classes.²² Middle-class observers who were unfamiliar with working-class customs and attitudes towards common-law marriage, could not countenance a stable

¹⁵ ‘Prostitution’, *Westminster Review*, p. 459.

¹⁶ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 103.

¹⁷ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 103.

¹⁸ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹ ‘Prostitution’, *Westminster Review*, p. 458.

²⁰ Hemyng, ‘Prostitution in London’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 257.

²¹ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, pp. 17-18.

²² Hemyng, ‘Prostitution in London’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 221.

family relationship without the bonds of a legally sanctioned union.²³ Hence the working-class acceptance of common-law marriage was frequently blamed for a woman's downfall.

Some were said to become prostitutes because they were 'born and bred in sin'.²⁴ They had been born into that milieu and educated to crime.²⁵ Their parents were thieves and prostitutes and for them there was no fall because they already inhabited the lowest level of existence.²⁶ It was argued that one had only to search the streets of London, Dublin, Glasgow, and to a lesser extent any large town to find examples.²⁷ It was self evident that the absence of parental care or the inculcation of proper precepts could hasten a girl's move into prostitution.²⁸ Many of those proper precepts which parents failed to pass on concerned religion. Accordingly irreligion received its share of the blame for young women entering prostitution since it was the 'prolific parent of every vice and crime'.²⁹ Deterioration in civil rule was also seen to create an environment in which prostitution could flourish. It was argued that while thieves were apprehended, the prostitute was 'left undisturbed in her vocation'.³⁰

Social observers understood that changes within their working environment frequently drove women to prostitution. Most women in this study possessed alternative vocations, and nineteenth-century surveys of trades and occupations which rendered women more vulnerable to economic distress, parallel the stories of transported women. For others, critical life events created situations in which prostitution was their only means of survival. Clearly articulated causes of prostitution can be investigated using the convict records as women arriving in Van Diemen's Land frequently explained why they had made that choice. For those who were less forthcoming, the circumstances of their crime often reveal the causes. In many instances the reasons gleaned are those cited by nineteenth-century city missionaries, social reformers and journalists. And while the causes are recognizable and conform to a pattern, it is the judgements made about the

²³ Michael Sturma, 'Eye of the Beholder: The Stereotype of Women Convicts 1788-1852', *Labour History*, no. 34 (May, 1978), pp. 3-10.

²⁴ 'Prostitution', *Westminster Review*, p. 458.

²⁵ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, p. 6.

²⁶ 'Prostitution', *Westminster Review*, p. 458.

²⁷ 'Prostitution', *Westminster Review*, p. 458.

²⁸ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 257.

²⁹ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, p. 11.

³⁰ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, p. 11.

women which should differentiate the nineteenth-century from the twenty-first century observer.

In 1850 the *Westminster Review* had no doubt that poverty, whether overt or concealed, was the primary cause of prostitution. It acknowledged 'that grinding poverty approaching to actual want', as the greatest source of prostitution in Britain and all other countries.³¹ But the particular path which led to that poverty determined the degree of moral culpability. For some women poverty was a way of life, for others it arose through an alteration in their circumstances. The loss of support through death or desertion by a bread winner, and a lack of traditional family networks could force a woman into prostitution as could chronically low wages and low demand for certain trades. But even when observers acknowledged that role of poverty, they were reluctant to abandon the suspicion that a negligent upbringing, vanity, indolence, intemperance, or imprudent acquaintances were to blame.

When charity was available, it was often conditional. Sylvia Pinches believed that in eighteenth-century Birmingham, the virtuous were privileged when charity was dispersed.³² There existed a propensity to allocate alms in ratio to respectability, and women who were destined for Van Diemen's Land could not always demonstrate that respectability.

Occupational causes of prostitution

It is no coincidence that recruits to prostitution came mainly from the most impoverished sections of the community where women's opportunities to gain skills were limited. If a woman was able to enter a trade it was usually in an area of the lowest pay and most vulnerability such as domestic service or the clothing industry. The limitations placed on women's work as being unskilled, casual, irregular, seasonal, and interrupted by her domestic responsibilities for child and aged care, had a huge impact

³¹ 'Prostitution', *Westminster Review*, p. 460-461.

³² Sylvia Pinches, 'Women as Objects and Agents of Charity in Eighteenth-Century Birmingham', in Rosemary Sweet & Penelope Lane (eds.), *Women in Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England 'On the Town'* (Aldershot [Hampshire], 2003), p. 74.

on her working life.³³ For married women those limitations therefore dictated a leaning towards home-based employment which could easily be picked up and put down such as washing, mangling, cleaning, folding, packing, and sewing.³⁴ Prostitution was a supplement to those unreliable methods of generating income. Women could spend periods in respectable employment, on parish relief or in criminal activities.³⁵ But for the unsupported woman without a trade in periods of economic distress, prostitution was often an alternative to the workhouse.³⁶ Ironically, prostitution could also be a casual and seasonal occupation, for since it was linked to male leisure patterns, it too was responsive to fluctuations in the trade cycle and economic rhythms of the week.³⁷

Judith Walkowitz found that most women entered prostitution as a response to local conditions of the urban job market and seldom in a pre-meditated fashion.³⁸ While poverty predisposed women to prostitution, Walkowitz argued that its cause was not always sheer want or starvation, but rather prostitution could instead be a choice among a series of unpleasant alternatives.³⁹ Although Walkowitz looked at prostitution in the later Victorian period the pre-conditions and motivations of the women entering the trade remain constant. In the 1840s Bracebridge Hemyng recognised that one of the most significant causes of prostitution in London was:

the low rate of wages that the female industrial classes of this great city receive, in return for the most arduous and wearisome labour. Innumerable cases of prostitution through want, solely and absolutely, are constantly occurring.⁴⁰

Henry Mayhew ensured that Hemyng was one of the most widely published investigative journalists in the middle of the nineteenth century, but he was not alone in examining occupations. William Logan, William Acton, James Miller and William Tait forensically sifted through the evidence and isolated certain trades which they believed

³³ Deborah Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 87.

³⁴ Sally Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (eds.), *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* (Hammondsworth, 1979), p. 97.

³⁵ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 192.

³⁶ Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 109.

³⁷ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 23.

³⁸ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 14.

³⁹ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 19.

⁴⁰ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 213.

predisposed their female employees to a career in prostitution.⁴¹ Those in greatest peril were sewing girls, milliners, needlewomen, dressmakers, mantua-makers, factory girls, and domestic servants. It seemed that few female occupations escaped the association with prostitution.

The clothing trade was an essential source of employment for women. Some practitioners shared common skills and processes, while others worked exclusively within the one field. In the nineteenth century millinery had a much broader meaning than the manufacture of hats. A milliner produced caps, bonnets, scarves and all outward attire except for gowns, and was therefore considered to be more skilled than a dressmaker.⁴² Along with an obligation for the working class to adopt middle-class values, came the desire to be considered 'genteel'. Millinery and mantua-making were favoured by those who considered themselves 'a little above the vulgar'.⁴³ They were skilled, but more importantly 'respectable' occupations; respectability being an essential quality for the aspirant lower middle class. Nevertheless, in 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft referred to the genteel trades of mantua-making and millinery as being synonymous with prostitution because of low wages and the risk of seduction.⁴⁴

Thomas Reid chose lengthy sentimental tracts to exhort his female convict charges to turn from crime.⁴⁵ Prostitution lurked in wait for the weak and unwary female and he illustrated that path to destruction through tales of simple lives. One was of a

humble but industrious and virtuous girl apprenticed to a respectable dress-maker ... marked down by another class of prowlers ... the giddy creature in an unlucky moment forgets all the precepts of an anxious mother, and of a revered father ... until woful [*sic*] experience opens the eyes of the infatuated girl to a sense of her lost reputation, and despair prepares her for the worst, the dernier fate of those in such condition.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*; Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation*; Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in its Moral, Social, & Sanitary Aspects*; Tait, *Magdalenism. An Inquiry*.

⁴² Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 84, quoting Henry Mayhew.

⁴³ Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (London, 1981 [1930]), p. 289.

⁴⁴ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures of Political and Moral Subjects*, vol. 1, 2nd Edition (Westmead, 1970 [London, 1792]), p. 261, cited in Anna Clark, 'Whores and Gossips: sexual reputation in London 1770-1825', in Arina Angerman (ed.), *Current Issues in Women's History* (London, 1989), pp. 235.

⁴⁵ Thomas Reid was the surgeon-superintendent on the *Morley* which brought female convicts to Van Diemen's Land in 1820.

⁴⁶ Thomas Reid, *Two Voyages to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, With a*

According to Sally Alexander, distressed dressmakers and needlewomen were a notorious casualty of London's unpredictable labour market.⁴⁷ Alexander believed that almost unmitigated destitution was the fate of practically all needlewomen in the 1830s and 1840s, and indeed throughout the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ The typical needlewoman was between twenty and thirty years of age and lived predominantly in St Martin's in the Fields, the Strand, St. Giles and the East End.⁴⁹ Economic instability of the early nineteenth century impacted on the industry which was already subject to seasonal unemployment, and long hours and poor wages were endemic, even during periods of high employment. The preference for needlework as a genteel trade, in a climate of limited work opportunities, guaranteed that wages remained low.⁵⁰ The high cost of property rent in London along with the expense of fuel and its transportation, prohibited the establishment of large factories, so sweated outwork predominated in the capital.⁵¹ Many women were day workers or outworkers for the season, and dressmaking and needlework were areas which suffered severely from the increase in slop-work.⁵² As the slop clothing market grew it excluded the traditional practices of the clothing industry, and even when needlewomen found employment in the new system it remained precarious.

In 1840 William Tait investigated the economic conditions which accompanied prostitution in Edinburgh. Most telling was a glut within women's traditional areas of domestic service and sewing trades such as millinery, dressmaking, stay making, and bonnet making.⁵³ The same conditions confronted milliners and dressmakers in London a decade later where those trades were significantly over-represented among women who 'had given themselves up to prostitution', and were arrested for disorderly behaviour.⁵⁴ Over a ten year period between 1850 and 1860, 41,954 prostitutes were

Description of the Present Condition of that Interesting Colony: including Facts and Observations relative to the State and Management of Convicts of both Sexes also Reflections on Seduction and its General Consequences (London, 1822), pp. 384-385, online:

<http://archive.org/stream/twovoyagestonew00reidgoog#page/n30/mode/2up>

⁴⁷ Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 87.

⁴⁸ Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 106.

⁴⁹ Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 105.

⁵⁰ Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 289.

⁵¹ Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 79.

⁵² Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 87.

⁵³ Tait, *Magdalenism: An Inquiry*, p. 107.

⁵⁴ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 263.

apprehended by the London Metropolitan Police for disorderly behaviour.⁵⁵ Four hundred and sixty four were milliners and dressmakers so Hemyng concluded that if 464 were disorderly, then the numbers of well behaved milliners and dressmakers who had turned to prostitution must have been even greater. The 1841 Census Returns for England indicated that in the decade before Hemyng's research, the industry employed 70,518 women aged twenty and over, and a further 18,561 under the age of twenty as dressmakers, milliners and needlewomen.⁵⁶ The association between prostitution and millinery was pervasive and David Shuttleton found that during the eighteenth century milliners' shops were perceived as mere shop-fronts for brothels.⁵⁷

Van Diemen's Land received women who had been trained in those 'genteel trades' and who had turned to prostitution. Rosanna Holcraft's history demonstrated that distressed dressmakers and milliners were not unique to London or Edinburgh. She was convicted at the Lancaster Quarter Sessions for stealing from her employer.⁵⁸ As a dressmaker and milliner in Liverpool, the insecurity of her trade may have prompted her to change to prostitution and domestic service. She had been gaoled for vagrancy on three occasions; vagrancy being one of the few legal means to rid the streets of prostitutes.⁵⁹ A prior conviction for theft sealed Rosanna's fate, and she arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1840 on the *Gilbert Henderson*. Another who worked in the garment industry was Mary Ann McLaren. She was a staymaker who was convicted in her native town of Edinburgh for stealing money from Robert McGill.⁶⁰ Although described on the assignment list as a staymaker, Mary Ann had spent four years on the town so the surgeon-superintendent of the *Nautilus* recorded her trade as 'prostitute'.⁶¹ But he added

⁵⁵ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 263

⁵⁶ Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 318, Appendix. This equates to almost ninety thousand when the entire female population of England was 7,601,909, *A Vision of Britain Through Time* (University of Plymouth Website), online: <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/index.jsp> (16 August 2011). See chapter 2 for the percentages of needlewomen transported to Van Diemen's Land.

⁵⁷ David E Shuttleton, 'Mary Chandler's *Description of Bath* (1733): A Tradeswoman Poet of the Georgian Urban Renaissance', in Rosemary Sweet & Penelope Lane (eds.), *Women in Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England 'On the Town'* (Aldershot [Hampshire], 2003), p. 178.

⁵⁸ TAHO CON40/1/6, Rosanna Holcraft (363H) per *Gilbert Henderson* (1840), image 38. Rosanna achieved fame when she was named in the Report into Female Convict Discipline, for having an 'improper relationship' with Margaret Carr: TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline, 1841-1843', p. 293, evidence of Eliza Churchill.

⁵⁹ Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, pp. 97- 99.

⁶⁰ TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Ann McLaren (182L) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 217.

⁶¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838) Surgeon-Superintendent John G Stewart.

that she was ‘quiet and always well behaved, neat and cleanly’. Like so many Scottish prisoners, Mary Ann could read and write.

The hatting industry also employed young women and Mary Callan belonged to that group of semi-skilled workers. Mary grew up in Bermondsey where her father Richard Callan was a shoemaker in Newman's Row off Bermondsey Street.⁶² She could read and write which may have reflected her family's economic status. Her occupation was that of a ‘beaver puller’ and she may have been employed at Christy's, a large hat factory which at the time occupied both sides of Bermondsey Street, Southwark.⁶³ By the early 1840s almost two hundred women were employed on the site. It specialised in the manufacture of beaver hats, and women like Mary were trained in plucking the beaver skins, cropping off the fur, sorting wool, plucking and cutting rabbit's fur, shearing the nap of the blocked hat, and fur pulling.⁶⁴ Such work could be seasonal and vulnerable to fashion caprices and Mary turned to prostitution and then theft. She was found guilty in the Croydon Assizes of stealing a watch from a sailor named Bolton. A previous conviction for assault in Horsemonger Lane prompted the gaoler to enter on to her record, ‘bad character and disposition, in prison before’.⁶⁵ She was single and had lived with a man named Trokley. On disembarking in Van Diemen's Land she was directed to the Female Factory, possibly because the skills of a beaver puller were of limited use in settler households.

The same industry employed a ‘beaver cutter’ and Rachael Chamberlain possessed that trade when she arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1822.⁶⁶ Her native place was Bristol but in July 1821 she was found guilty in the Old Bailey of stealing a bolster.⁶⁷ Rachael was reputedly a ‘very bad character’ who had been detained in thirteen gaols. Her husband Abraham was transported to Sydney and then Van Diemen's Land, as was her brother. The surgeon-superintendent on the *Mary Anne* described Rachael as ‘A most

⁶² TAHO CON40/1/1, Mary Callan (118C) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 292.

⁶³ TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Mermaid*); Alexander, ‘Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London’, p. 92.

⁶⁴ Alexander, ‘Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London’, p. 92.

⁶⁵ TAHO CON40/1/1, Mary Callan (118C) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 292.

⁶⁶ ML TP D3 CY1195, Indent for the *Mary Anne* 1822.

⁶⁷ TAHO CON40/1/1, Rachael Chamberlain (45C) per *Mary Anne* (1822), image 257.

infamous character a confirmed Thief and Vile prostitute a sly woman, hypocrite, blasphemer, drunkard, revengeful, reprobate refractory, insolent'.⁶⁸

The shoemaking industry was another which offered tenuous employment to women in the nineteenth century. Jean Mc Beath was a shoebinder from Dalkeith near Edinburgh, who in 1828 was convicted of stealing children's clothes. She was a thirty six year old single mother who could read and write. She explained that she had last worked binding shoes for some shoemakers and was also on the town.⁶⁹ Shoe binding probably involved piece work which was low paid and unreliable. Prostitution therefore offered Jean a necessary supplement to that income. When women undertook piece work they were trained to perform one particular facet of the production, thereby minimising any ownership or control over the item or their working conditions.⁷⁰

When investigating 'disorderly prostitutes' and their trades, Hemyng also singled out laundresses for special attention. They were the second most likely group to come to the notice of the London constabulary during the period from 1850 to 1860, when 418 laundress/prostitutes were detained for disorderly behaviour. Hemyng offered three suggestions as to why a laundress would resort to prostitution. The first was the influence of their trade, which was demoralising in the extreme, secondly their low wages, and thirdly the very large numbers who practised the trade. The latter he believed to be the most likely explanation. The Census Returns for England in 1841 confirmed the very high numbers involved in the laundry industry. It noted that 43,497 women aged twenty and over and 1,522 women under the age of twenty were registered in the industry.⁷¹

Deborah Oxley found a common thread in the crimes of some occupational groups and among laundresses, laundry maids and washerwoman it was particularly evident. Washerwomen tended to steal bedding and linen. Laundresses and laundry maids were more likely to steal clothing since they were employed to launder these more delicate items.⁷² The majority of women classed as laundresses, laundry maids or washerwomen

⁶⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822) Surgeon-Superintendent James Hall.

⁶⁹ TAHO CON40/1/1, Jean Mc Beath (152B) per *Harmony* (1829), image 140.

⁷⁰ Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 91.

⁷¹ Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, Appendix, p. 319.

⁷² Oxley, *Convict Maids*, pp. 54-55.

in this study were transported for the theft of a watch or money – crimes which were associated with prostitution as they stole from their clients.

The age distribution of women listed as laundresses and washerwomen was examined by Kirsty Reid who found that older women and single mothers were over-represented within these groups.⁷³ Only 2 per cent of prostitutes in this study claimed those trades compared with 6 per cent of the non-prostitute cohort.⁷⁴ (Table 3:1 below) Since women identified as prostitutes are a younger cohort and were less likely to have children, the lower numbers would tend to support Reid's findings.⁷⁵

Table 3.1: **Comparison between laundresses and washerwomen who arrived in Van Diemen's Land**

Kirsty Reid (3088 female convicts 1820-1839)	No.	%
Laundress	292	6.6
Washerwoman	20	0.4
Chris Leppard (1251 non prostitutes 1829-1842)		
Laundress	74	5.9
Washerwoman	6	0.5
Chris Leppard (595 prostitutes 1829-1842)		
Laundress	13	2.2
Washerwoman	0	0

Source: TAHO CON19/1 Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853; Reid source: Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance', p. 129.

Elizabeth Law fits Kirsty Reid's profile. A thirty three year old widow from Cork, Elizabeth explained that she had last lived in the *Salmon and Ball*, Back Court, Bunhill Row where she did washing and ironing.⁷⁶ The clerk on board the *Mermaid* therefore listed her as a laundry maid, but her skills were understated. For Elizabeth could also fine-pleat. However the wages must have proved insufficient to support her two

⁷³ Kirsty Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance: the Convict Women of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839', A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh (1995), p. 46. Reid also looked at the percentage of women arriving in Van Diemen's Land who were engaged in those occupations. She found that 6.6 per cent of women were laundresses and 0.4 per cent were washerwomen, p. 129.

⁷⁴ Appendix G: Trades of women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land 1829-1842.

⁷⁵ This is based on an analysis of thirteen ships (Appendix E.).

⁷⁶ TAHO CON40/1/5, Elizabeth Law (72L) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 316; TAHO CON19/1/3, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Mermaid*); ML TP 23 CY 1275, Appropriation list for the *Mermaid*.

daughters, as it seems was prostitution, for she was found guilty of stealing 9/6 from John Purdon in the Star Court, Lincoln's Inn Fields. Elizabeth and her daughters Mary Ann and Jane arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1828 where her skills were employed at the King's Orphan School.

During the nineteenth century a huge but highly disposable population of domestic servants was vital to the operation of middle and upper-class households. Working-class families also employed skivvies and nursemaids when wives were occupied outside the home. The Census Returns for England in 1841 showed that domestic service employed 447,606 women aged twenty and over, and 264,887 women under the age of twenty.⁷⁷ This equated to 9 per cent of the total female population of England at the time.⁷⁸ With fewer factory-based industries in London, there was no single staple form of employment as in the northern textile towns.⁷⁹ Therefore domestic service employed the majority of young women both in London and many other large centres.

Domestic service was however considered a prelude to prostitution, since it was accepted that none were more exposed to dangers and temptations than maidservants.⁸⁰ Hemyng observed that 'Female servants are far from being a virtuous class ... there can be no doubt that the tone of morality among servant-maids in the metropolis is low'.⁸¹ Their propensity for promiscuity seemed unbridled as they were censured for giving themselves up to their employer's sons, policemen on the beat, soldiers in the parks, and even shop men whom they met in the streets.⁸² That link between domestic service and prostitution was also noticed by Patrick Colquhoun earlier in the century. After observing the characteristics of prostitutes in London he decided that,

the great mass ... are mostly composed of women who have been in a state of menial servitude, and of whom not a few, from the love of idleness and dress, with (in this case) *the misfortune*

⁷⁷ Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 320, Appendix (Occupations of women in 1841).

⁷⁸ *A Vision of Britain Through Time* (University of Plymouth Website), online: <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/index.jsp> (16 August 2011).

⁷⁹ Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 66.

⁸⁰ Reverend William Tuckniss, 'The Agencies at Present in Operation within the Metropolis, for the Suppression of Vice and Crime', in Henry Mayhew (ed.), *London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Those That Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work*, vol. 4 (London, 1967 [1860-1861]), p. xxvi.

⁸¹ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 257.

⁸² Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 257.

of good looks, have partly from inclination, not seldom from previous seduction and loss of character, resorted to prostitution as a livelihood.⁸³

Female servants were credited with a disproportionate number of the characteristics conducive to a life of prostitution such as greed, vanity, lack of education, lack of intelligence, a dubious upbringing, and a tendency to ape their betters. In the course of his investigations, Hemyng interviewed ‘a maid-of-all-work, a simple minded, ignorant, uneducated, vain little body ... [who] received the munificent remuneration of eight pounds annually.’⁸⁴ He was therefore persuaded that,

Maidservants live well, have no care or anxiety, no character worth speaking about to lose, for the origin of most of them is obscure, are fond of dress, and under these circumstances it cannot be wondered that they are as a body immoral and unchaste.⁸⁵

Servants were said to copy their mistresses’ way of dressing in order to attract men of a higher class, so to explain their entry into prostitution Hemyng believed that, ‘Vanity is at the bottom of all this, and is one of the chief characteristics of a class not otherwise naturally vicious.’⁸⁶ City missionary William Logan identified further character flaws. He discovered that maidservants became prostitutes after indolence and bad temper caused them to quit their situations.⁸⁷ But of the 41,954 prostitutes detained in London between 1850 and 1860 for being disorderly, only 400 were discovered to be domestic servants, a fact which surprised observers, ‘for they are exposed to great temptations, and form a very numerous body’.⁸⁸ Perhaps domestic servants were more orderly than laundresses. Rescue societies also found that domestic service was an occupation which fed into prostitution in the mid nineteenth-century. The London Rescue Society claimed that 90 per cent of its inmates gave domestic service as their former occupation, and the

⁸³ Colquhoun, *Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*, p. 399. [italics in original]

⁸⁴ Hemyng, ‘Prostitution in London’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 257.

⁸⁵ Hemyng, ‘Prostitution in London’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 258. ‘Character’ must have referred to ‘morals’ and not her ‘references’ because without a reference a maidservant would be unlikely to secure a position in the first place.

⁸⁶ Hemyng, ‘Prostitution in London’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 258.

⁸⁷ Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation*, p. 11.

⁸⁸ Hemyng, ‘Prostitution in London’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 263.

Plymouth Female Home stated that most of its entrants were domestic servants of a lower class.⁸⁹

The domestic servant was therefore through force of numbers and necessity, a highly visible figure within in households at all levels of society. That familiarity may have qualified middle-class commentators who visited charitable institutions and working-class neighbourhoods, to claim a greater understanding of her plight. Equally visible were assigned servants within colonial households in Van Diemen's Land. Again that visibility ensured that their behaviour and defects were frequent subjects for investigation and interrogation within the colony.⁹⁰

Mr Tatham of Mount Street, Grosvenor Square had last employed Elizabeth Rix as a housemaid. It is unclear why she left his service but her next employer Ann Preston charged Elizabeth with the theft of a watch. Elizabeth's conduct in gaol was orderly and she stated that she had spent time on the town. Presumably that was when she was 'out of place', because a housemaid would have few moments of leisure time in which to practice both occupations. But not so according to George Drysdale who explained that maidservants were known to take clients to a room while on an errand for their employer, and therefore suffered no loss of character while engaged in prostitution.⁹¹ Perhaps Elizabeth Rix was also logistically adept. She arrived in Van Diemen's Land on the *Harmony* in 1829 after which she appeared to pursue both of her former careers.

The pain which Esther Lynes felt when she left her husband David was expressed in the tattoo on her right arm which declared, 'D. Lions'.⁹² This housemaid could read and write when she arrived in Van Diemen's Land so whether it was an accepted spelling of her surname or whether she only acquired her literacy skills on the passage after her tattoo was executed is unclear. Perhaps the tattooist had full editorial control over the finished product. Esther was born in Cartwright Square, London and had nine siblings.

⁸⁹ Judith and Daniel Walkowitz, "We Are Not Beasts of the Field", Prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Act', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 1, issue 3-4 (1973), p. 84.

⁹⁰ *British Parliamentary Papers. Reports from Select Committees on Transportation with minutes of evidence proceedings, appendices and indices. Crime and Punishment. Transportation 3* (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 22, evidence of Reverend W Ullathorne. Ullathorne believed that the conduct of assigned female servants was as common a topic of conversation with the ladies (meaning the gentry) in the colonies, as was the weather in Britain.

⁹¹ Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, p. 245.

⁹² TAHO CON19/1/12, Description lists of female convicts (*America*).

The maternal bond endured when she sailed with her mother Mary McCarthy on the *America*.⁹³ Esther's records reveal only that she stole from 'the person', but her mother Mary was more forthright in explaining her own reason for being transported. Mary was found guilty of receiving seventeen pounds, which was stolen by her daughter Esther.⁹⁴ When called as a witness at the Old Bailey, William Slee stated that he had declined to go home with Esther when she propositioned him between Ratcliffe Cross and Cock Hill.⁹⁵ He finally agreed to go to her room and sent her out for some ale but unbeknown to him she also relieved him of the contents of his purse. Esther was discovered at her parents' house and her mother was implicated in the crime. She was one of thousands of housemaids in London at the time, but according to Esther's statement on arrival in Van Diemen's Land, she had spent the past eighteen months on the town.

Catherine Barry and Ellen Blyth were both housemaids who arrived on the *Hydery* in 1832, and each claimed to have been on the town for about twelve months. They resided in the same street in St Giles, possibly sharing lodgings, and they were found guilty of stealing money from William Nitingale [*sic*] at three in the morning in Hanover Street, Long Acre.⁹⁶ Neither was known to their gaoler, which would suggest that they were accomplished criminals or that crime was a new survival strategy. Prostitution may have suffered from the economic fluctuations of the job market, since their victim had refused to avail himself of their services before they robbed him.

Chaos erupted in Coleman Street when Mary Creedon arrived home from the market and found her trunk broken open and her housemaid missing. Although Mary Sullivan was the housemaid in question, the gaoler at Newgate knew her to be a prostitute. Sullivan was found guilty of stealing a coat, a pair of trousers, a watch and a chain, the property of Mrs. Creedon's son John, as well as a gown belonging to her mistress. The redheaded housemaid from County Cork arrived in Van Diemen's Land on the *Persian* and admitted that she had been transported for theft but added that, 'I never was in

⁹³ TAHO CON40/1/5, Esther Lynes (100) per *America* (1831), image 330; ML TP 11 CY 1242, Indent for the *America*.

⁹⁴ TAHO CON40/1/1, Mary McCarthy (162C) per *America* (1831), image 315; ML TP 11 CY 1242, Indent for the *America*.

⁹⁵ Cock Lane, Southwark was recognized as a site for brothels in the eighteenth century. See Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London*, p. 80.

⁹⁶ *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913*, online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18320216-259-defend2158&div=t18320216-259#highlight>, 16 February 1832, p. 92 (12 September 2011).

prison before in my Life' and 'I never was on the town'. She must have impressed Surgeon-Superintendent James Patton, because he noted that she was 'A very quiet and very orderly woman, and appears worthy of encouragement.'⁹⁷

Both Ann Edwards and Ann Effingham were nineteen years old, and employed in the silk industry at Spitalfields before being transported. But thirteen years separated their crimes. Since the seventeenth century, the silk industry had been concentrated in the Spitalfields area of London and was a sector which had been particularly generous to young women, providing well-paid secure employment. Until 1824 weavers had enjoyed a degree of security under the Spitalfield Acts which regulated their wages and conditions.⁹⁸ In 1825 however, the industry began a transformation to the factory system and a conversion to steam power.⁹⁹ Families which had benefited from a relatively high standard of living were suddenly destitute. The seven silk workers who sailed on the *Providence* in 1826 bore witness to the dislocation which the repeal of the acts and the conversion to steam power had wrought upon the industry.

Spitalfields also had a reputation for immorality, crime and vice which was confirmed when Ann Edwards and her two accomplices lured Alexander Randall into a house in Cable Court.¹⁰⁰ Alexander was a lighterman at the docks and had just received his pay. After settling a few debts he took some refreshment at the *East India House* and bought two neat's feet, one calf's foot and some cucumbers. Ann was found guilty of stealing his remaining twenty five sovereigns and although she was a silk weaver, her gaoler recorded her as a prostitute.¹⁰¹ Her CON40 entry described her as 'last on the town', and her indent as 'an unfortunate girl on the Town four years'.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ TAHO CON40/1/9, Mary Sullivan (112S) per *Persian* (1827), image 56.

⁹⁸ British History Online: Industries: *Silk-weaving*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22161> p. 3 (19 September 2010); Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 171-172, 176.

⁹⁹ British History Online: Industries: *Silk-weaving*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22161> p.1 (19 September 2010); Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London', p. 79.

¹⁰⁰ TAHO CON40/1/3, Ann Edwards (21E) per *Providence* (1826), image 121.

¹⁰¹ *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913* online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18250915-257-verdict1382&div=t18250915-257#highlight>, 15 September 1825, p. 95 (12 September 2011).

¹⁰² TAHO CON40/1/3, Ann Edwards (21E) per *Providence* (1826), image 121; ML TP 22 CY 1274, Indent for the *Providence*.

A decade later, Ann Effingham was employed as a silk winder in Spitalfields, where the mechanisation of the industry had mixed effects upon her specific skill.¹⁰³ When machinery incorporated the winding process many jobs were lost. Yet in factories where the process remained separate from the weaving, silk winders retained their jobs and were frequently in great demand as they wound for numerous looms at the one time.¹⁰⁴ Shoplifting and prostitution had however augmented Ann's income until her successful prosecution by a shopkeeper in Tinsbury Square. Five years after arriving on the *Majestic*, Ann married John Cole and had recorded on her marriage certificate that she was a silk winder. That small inclusion may have been Ann's reminder that she had once belonged to a skilled trade of which she was still proud.¹⁰⁵

Prostitution was seen to be primarily an urban phenomenon, and the places in which women were tried appear to support that assumption. So what was perceived as an increase in prostitution became inextricably linked to the social upheaval and community dislocation which accompanied industrialisation and urbanisation. Researchers observed that,

There is a tone of morality throughout the rural districts of England, which is unhappily wanting in the large towns and the centres of particular manufactures. Commerce is incontestably demoralizing.¹⁰⁶

William Logan found factories to be 'a fruitful source of evil', and a prime cause of prostitution through the mixing of the sexes.¹⁰⁷ He was alerted to this danger through the observations of J Reade Esquire, a committee member of the Leeds Guardian Asylum.¹⁰⁸ That aspect of factory work particularly concerned Ralph Wardlaw who in 1840 rebuked William Tait for his failure to acknowledge the 'corrupting influence of extensive factories'.¹⁰⁹ Wardlaw believed that the corruption stemmed from the proximity of young men and women who necessarily met and worked together. Physical proximity was the issue, for wherever one corrupt element existed, all could potentially

¹⁰³ TAHO CON40/1/4, Ann Effingham (70E) per *Majestic* (1839), image 93.

¹⁰⁴ Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 169-172.

¹⁰⁵ TAHO RGD37/1/4/ (1537) Register-General's Department, Marriage Register, Ann Effingham to John Cole, 24 January 1844, Hobart.

¹⁰⁶ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 255.

¹⁰⁷ Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁹ Wardlaw, *Lectures on Female Prostitution*, p. 110.

be infected. It was by such means young women could be lured into the ways of prostitution. Total segregation was the only solution.¹¹⁰

Not only did Sir Charles Shaw associate the employment of women in factories with low wages, but he concurred with his contemporaries that factory work was an initiation into prostitution.¹¹¹ He believed that thousands of females ‘might have been happy wives and tender mothers, if it were not for the accursed system of employing females in factories [instead they] become common prostitutes’.¹¹² Work-rooms were equally perilous places although ‘Loose conversation appears to be carried on to a greater extent in work-rooms in Scotland than England.’¹¹³ Factory work afforded women higher wages and more independence than they had previously enjoyed, so a closer and more critical scrutiny of their participation was only to be expected.

The occupation of ‘factory servant’ was damning enough, but Margaret Grant was also from Aberdeen so William Logan would have viewed her six years on the town as inevitable.¹¹⁴ She was in her mid-twenties with several prior convictions for theft when she arrived in Van Diemen's Land on the *Nautilus* in 1838. Her skills as a factory servant were transferred to a colonial master where as a servant of all work she was reasonably successful. For two years she served Mr Joseph Solomon in Launceston after which she joined the Reiby family at Hadspen.¹¹⁵ In 1842 she married George Glover and four years later was a free woman.¹¹⁶ Factory work and prostitution had not condemned Margaret to a lifetime of dissipation and crime.

Mary Maxwell was from equally unpromising origins in Glasgow where she worked in Mr Twigg's cotton mill.¹¹⁷ She had previously served thirty days in the Bridewell for vagrancy so her job at the mill must have improved her circumstances. But not

¹¹⁰ Wardlaw, *Lectures on Female Prostitution*, p. 110.

¹¹¹ Sir Charles Shaw, ‘Manufacturing Districts: Replies of Sir Charles Shaw to Lord Ashley MP regarding the Education, and Moral and Physical Condition of the Labouring Classes’ (London, 1843), p. 33.

¹¹² Shaw, ‘Manufacturing Districts’, p. 3.

¹¹³ Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation*, p. 13.

¹¹⁴ TAHO CON40/1/4, Margaret Grant (207G) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 175.

¹¹⁵ PRO HO 10/51 Van Diemen's Land Female Musters for 1841.

¹¹⁶ TAHO CON52/1/2, Index to Convicts Applications for Permission to Marry 1829-1857, p. 66; TAHO RGD37/1/2, Register-General's Department, Marriage Register (1364), Margaret Grant to George Glover per *Gilmore*, 30 March 1842, Launceston.

¹¹⁷ The Twigg brothers moved from London in the 1750s to found silk and cotton mills in Glasgow. Stuart Nisbet, ‘The Making of Scotland's First Industrial Region: The Early Cotton Industry in Renfrewshire’, *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (July, 2009), p.17.

sufficiently, since Mary told the clerk in Van Diemen's Land that she was on the town at nights when work was over. Theft brought her to Van Diemen's Land in 1829 and after numerous colonial offences she was discovered in a disorderly house owned by Michael Caffrey, after which it was decided that 'too much liberty has been allowed this woman'.¹¹⁸ Her next charge was incurred when she broke out of the hospital and hid in the bedroom of Mr. Elliott, the dispenser of medicines. No doubt William Logan would have attributed Mary's ruin to her former employment in Mr Twigg's mill.

During the early nineteenth century the woollen manufacturing towns of the West Riding drew migrants from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.¹¹⁹ In spite of the lower death rates from improved medical care and hygiene, overcrowding in these centres still impacted on public health. Death rates in towns continued to be higher than in rural areas until the twentieth century. It was in such an environment that Caroline Hainsworth was found guilty of stealing silk handkerchiefs and spent fourteen months in gaol before embarking for Van Diemen's Land. Little is known about Caroline. Her place of trial was recorded as York/West Riding and she supported herself by factory work and prostitution. Surgeon-Superintendent James Clarke on the *Navarino* recorded the few known details of her life when he treated her during the voyage. On arrival she was too ill to undergo the routine processing which would have registered her physical characteristics and family background. Caroline died two weeks after arriving in the colony.¹²⁰

Dr Clarke also treated Margaret Leah on the same voyage. She admitted to only two convictions for pawning clothing (presumably stolen) yet her record accused her of larceny. The seventeen year old from Stockport had also moved between factory work and prostitution before being convicted at the Chester Quarter Sessions. Clarke listed both of her trades so he was probably not surprised when she presented with gonorrhoea.¹²¹ The same strategies supported Margaret Neillis.¹²² She had been a piecer

¹¹⁸ TAHO CON 40/1/7, Mary Maxwell (96M) per *Harmony* (1829), image 50.

¹¹⁹ Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, 'Introduction to the Third Edition', no pagination.

¹²⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841) Surgeon-Superintendent James L Clarke; ML TP 30 CY 1282, Appropriation list for the *Navarino*.

¹²¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841); TAHO CON40/1/6, Margaret Leah (207L) per *Navarino* (1841), image 225.

¹²² TAHO CON40/1/8, Margaret Neillis (83N) per *Rajah* (1841), image 105.

at a cotton mill and had spent four months on the town before her trial for housebreaking. While her conviction in Glasgow would indicate yet another irredeemable Scot, she in fact came from Londonderry. In Van Diemen's Land she was registered as a house servant and needlewoman, and on arrival Margaret was assigned to Launceston where both skills were in great demand.

The occupation of nailer was considered by some observers to be unfit for women due to the laborious physical work.¹²³ It was the trade in which Phillis Perry was trained, and in the eyes of the colonial authorities that rendered her 'unfit for service has never been brought up to House Work.'¹²⁴ In 1829 when Phillis was transported for shoplifting, nail making was one of the main trades employing women in the Black Country's metal industry.¹²⁵ The manufacture of nails, chains, nuts and bolts remained a domestic occupation for girls and women in the villages of South Staffordshire and Worcestershire until the mid nineteenth century. Although the factory system was beginning to claim some industries, it is more likely that Phillis' training and work would have been in small domestic workshops.¹²⁶ Phillis spent six months in gaol at Worcester for stealing a broom, where she was described as a prostitute with a very bad character.¹²⁷ Although the movement of women into male dominated trades was widely resisted, it gave some women a disposable income and the independence to pursue a variety of leisure activities. They too were scrutinised by social investigators as an entry to prostitution.

Intemperance was closely linked to prostitution since alcohol was thought to stimulate the 'animal' passion while at the same time lowering ones moral control. As James Miller observed, 'A woman that drinks will do anything.'¹²⁸ It then followed that once a woman had embarked upon her promiscuous lifestyle, the gin bottle offered solace for her shame. In 1834 the Select Committee of Inquiry into Drunkenness Among the

¹²³ Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 275.

¹²⁴ TAHO CON40/1/7, Phillis Perry (68P) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 196; ML TP 24 CY 1276, Indent for the *Lady of the Lake*.

¹²⁵ Kay Daniels, *Convict Women* (Crow's Nest, 1998), p. 55; Lucy Frost, 'your unfortunate and undutiful wife', in Lucy Frost and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart (eds.), *Chain letters: Narrating convict lives* (Carlton South, 2001), p. 109.

¹²⁶ Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 274-275.

¹²⁷ This appears on her CON40 record in the *Gaol Report* section but is not in the original gaol return from Worcester, nor is it on her indent. It does not occur in her *Statement of Offence* in her CON40 record, so the source of the information is unclear.

¹²⁸ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, p. 9.

Labouring Classes of the United Kingdom was told that following the Donnybrook Fair in Ireland, young women became 'unfortunates on the streets', having been ruined by the 'intemperate orgies'.¹²⁹

A symbol of this degeneracy was the public house. If Thomas Potter, gardener to Mr. Gurney at Norwood, had heeded the warning of William Logan, his daughter may not have arrived on the shores of Van Diemen's Land. Logan would have cautioned Mr Potter:

No parent, who looks to the safety of his daughter, should allow her to engage as a servant in an inn or public-house. It is almost impossible for young females to escape the snares which are laid for them by those who frequent such houses.¹³⁰

Evidently those snares entrapped Mary Potter Clark for after two years as a chambermaid at the *Horse Shoe Inn* Mary next earned her living on the town.¹³¹ She was charged with stealing a handkerchief from Henry Hartley a draper who said that he knew Mary was a woman of the town when she robbed him in Fleet Street at 12.30 at night. She asserted that no robbery had occurred but that the handkerchief was payment for indecent liberties which he took with her 'up the court'.¹³²

Mary Ann Jones not only worked as a servant at *The Grapes* in Salford, but she admitted that she had also lived on the premises, added to which she had spent three years on the town.¹³³ Hemyng found evidence of that link between alcohol and prostitution when he investigated 'low pubs' and places of ill repute in which prostitutes drank and entertained their customers.¹³⁴ Mary Ann had begun her career as a prostitute when she left her native Liverpool for Salford. Her first conviction for theft was in April 1825, which established a pattern of crime and culminated in her arrival in Van Diemen's Land three years later.

¹²⁹ Luddy, *Prostitution in Irish Society*, p. 24, citing the Select Committee of Inquiry into Drunkenness Among the Labouring Classes of the United Kingdom, Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, H C 1834 (559) viii, 315, letter of John C Graves, p. 442.

¹³⁰ Logan, *An Exposure, from Personal Observation*, p. 11.

¹³¹ TAHO CON40/1/1, Mary Potter Clark (125C) per *Harmony* (1829), image 297.

¹³² ML TP 24 CY 1276, Indent for the *Harmony*; *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913*, online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/images.jsp?doc=182807030010>, 3 July 1828, p. 630 (21 August 2011).

¹³³ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Ann Jones (56J) per *Borneo* (1828), image 187; *The Grapes* was in Liverpool Road, Eccles, Salford.

¹³⁴ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 230.

Another who gave her address as a public house was Mary Mason. She lived at *The Clocks Face Public House* in Manchester where she may have been employed as a servant since that was her given trade. According to her indent she had been a prostitute for three years, although she chose to call herself ‘an unfortunate Girl’.¹³⁵ She had several convictions for stealing a cloak, earrings and money, until she robbed Mr Wilcock. This time the verdict was transportation and she sailed on the *Borneo* with Mary Ann Jones. Within two months of arriving Mary was found intoxicated and in company with two men at 7 o’clock at night. Three months later she was found drunk in *Makepeace’s Public House* on the New Town Road. Mary’s conduct record does not reveal whether or not she returned to her old trade of prostitution, but what is certain is that she returned to the conviviality of the public house.

It is unclear why Mary Wood was in Flanders when she was delivered of her daughter Sarah. The year was 1795 so she may have accompanied her husband’s regiment. But by 1828 she had been widowed, remarried and was living in St George in the East, an old parish in London.¹³⁶ Her thirty-four year old daughter Sarah was still single and on the town, having previously lived with Hawkins who kept a public house in the Borough. Sarah was found guilty of stealing a jacket from Jonathan Blackman a sailor. Upon boarding the *Harmony* for Van Diemen’s Land, Mary visited the surgeon-superintendent who observed in her the symptoms of coughing blood, a feeling of suffocation, short dry cough, and chest pain; all of which would have been present while she awaited transportation in Newgate. On arrival she was assigned to Mr George Guest, a long time resident of Hobart Town.¹³⁷ But within weeks of entering the Guest household, Sarah was charged with being drunk and abusive to Mrs Guest. Her next two assignments ended under similar circumstances. In 1831 three years after arriving in the colony, Sarah died at the Female House of Correction in Hobart Town.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ ML TP 23 CY 1275, Indent for the *Borneo*; TAHO CON40/1/7, Mary Mason (74M) per *Borneo* (1828), image 39.

¹³⁶ TAHO CON40/1/9, Sarah Wood (122W) per *Harmony* (1829), image 283.

¹³⁷ George Guest was an emancipist who had arrived in New South Wales on the first fleet in 1788 and subsequently settled on Norfolk Island. He was granted land in Van Diemen’s Land when Norfolk Island was abandoned. See *Historical Records of Australia, Series 111, Despatches and Papers Relating to the Settlement of the States*, vol. 1, Frederick Watson (ed.) (Sydney, 1921), pp. 339, 354-355; John West, *The History of Tasmania with copious information respecting the Colonies of New South Wales Victoria South Australia etc, etc, etc*, A G L Shaw (ed.) (Sydney, 1981 [Launceston, 1852]), p. 560.

¹³⁸ TAHO RGD34/1/1, Register-General’s Department, Register of Burials in Tasmania (2371), 6 January 1831, Hobart.

Employment for these women was insufficient and unreliable and many chose prostitution to compensate for those deficiencies. As they arrived in Van Diemen's Land the stories which they told echoed the findings of social commentators and investigative journalists. But it was not only her work experience which could render a woman destitute. Critical events and changes which involved the loss of traditional networks and supports could have equally disastrous effects upon her ability to survive.

Critical life cycle events as causes of prostitution

Women who had been deserted by their husbands also provided recruits to the ranks of prostitution. This category received less attention from nineteenth-century commentators who preferred to create lists of vulnerable occupations and pernicious character traits rather than examine the more slippery category of a deserted wife. A respectable wife and mother who had been forced onto the streets to preserve the family unit defied the standard images of the prostitute. Luise White examined this phenomenon and concluded that women who entered prostitution under such circumstances, rather than being a social problem were a social solution. They kept families together.¹³⁹ But reticent as contemporaries were to explore the subject, convict records reveal that Van Diemen's Land was the destination of women who had been forced onto that path.

Paragon Lloyd was quick to point out that she had been married at Newington Church but that she had not heard from her husband Thomas for three years.¹⁴⁰ Her gaol report identified her as a prostitute when she robbed Master Mariner James Jennings, of one sovereign, four shillings and sixpence. Paragon's passage to Van Diemen's Land on the *Mermaid* was not her first ocean voyage. When she was questioned about her native place, she stated that she had been born at sea, so perhaps her unusual name identified the ship.

¹³⁹ Luise White, 'Prostitutes, Reformers, and Historians', *Criminal Justice History*, vol. 6 (1985), pp. 201-227, p. 208.

¹⁴⁰ TAHO CON40/1/5, Paragon Lloyd (65L) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 313.

The theft of seven five pound notes from a young man brought Ann Morby to Van Diemen's Land in 1836.¹⁴¹ She was a thirty year old farm servant who could wash, iron, milk and make butter. But as a deserted wife, she had supported herself and her child through prostitution. Ann had spent the past eight years on the town and explained to the clerk in Hobart Town that her husband Edward had 'run away from me 8 years ago'. In February 1844 after four applications to marry, from three different prospective husbands, she married Henry Owens.¹⁴²

Some deserted wives knew where their husbands could be found. As Myna Trustram noted,

The dissipated man, tired of his wife, and careless of his family, may, by the simple process of accepting the Queen's shilling, in a single moment divest himself of all future concern or responsibility.¹⁴³

Britain's military campaigns were therefore responsible for the prostitution of some young women when wives were left destitute. In 1851 Angus Stafford submitted a parcel of letters to the British House of Commons. They were from the female relatives of soldiers, who requested money to purchase a mangle or set themselves up in some form of business, otherwise they claimed that the workhouse or prostitution were their only options.¹⁴⁴ According to Trustram, military wives were victims of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 which specifically targeted men, and failed to provide for women without a breadwinner; either single, widowed or a deserted wife.¹⁴⁵

Many parishes devised strategies to deal with dependant military families. The parish had no power to force a soldier to support his family, nor could it stop his pay, since soldiers were exempt from compulsory family maintenance under the Mutiny Act.¹⁴⁶ With the onus upon the parish to maintain their poor, Guardian Societies preferred to

¹⁴¹ TAHO CON40/1/8, Ann Morby (234M) per *Arab* (1836), image 4.

¹⁴² TAHO CON52/1/2, Index to Convicts Applications for Permission to Marry 1829-1857, p. 140; TAHO RGD37/1/4, Register-General's Department, Marriage Register (1272), Ann Morby to Henry Owens, 19 February 1844, Hobart.

¹⁴³ Myna Trustram, *Women of the Regiment Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 60. Trustram is referring to an article in the *Herald of Peace*, p. 128.

¹⁴⁴ Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, p. 56, quoting the Muster Book of the 1st Battalion of the 28th Foot, for the years 1854-55.

¹⁴⁵ Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, pp. 8-9. This act reduced the reliance of the poor on public funds and abolished outdoor relief for those who were considered to be able bodied.

¹⁴⁶ Trustram, *Women of the Regiment*, p. 150.

sponsor women to follow their husbands abroad, rather than support them indefinitely at home. Lionel Smith from the Army Headquarters in Barbados appealed to the War Office to discourage parishes from dispatching dependant families. Not only was there insufficient civilian accommodation in the field or garrison, but a shortage of rations often meant that the soldier sacrificed his own provisions to feed his family. This was the situation when a woman could locate her husband and join him before the regiment moved on.¹⁴⁷ The circumstances were direr for a woman who arrived too late and found herself deserted in a garrison town with no friends or family.

When soldiers married without leave or permission, their motives were often found to be 'less than honourable' and the women who made such injudicious marriages were sometimes abandoned. It was claimed that Scottish and Irish regiments were more infamous than their English counterparts for deceptively entrapping women into marriage. English women were reputedly more likely to look to the future and employ greater caution before marrying a soldier.¹⁴⁸ Trustringham examined marriage patterns for men in the British army in the 1870s and found that they married the poorest women of the towns and neighbourhoods in which they were stationed. And while allowing for the large proportion of Irishmen in the army she also found 'a marked propensity for men to marry women who had been born in Ireland.'¹⁴⁹

It was under such circumstances that Hannah Mathers met her husband Isaac.¹⁵⁰ He was a soldier in the 23rd Welch Fusiliers based in County Clare, and when his regiment moved, Hannah followed it to Kent in the southeast corner of England. But when it next decamped Hannah was left behind, where, friendless and unemployed, the Irish housemaid spent the next three years on the town. She was twice gaoled on vagrancy charges, and when she came before the court for stealing two sovereigns, Hannah was transported to Van Diemen's Land on the *Edward*.

Ellen Scott's husband held the senior rank of a sergeant-major in the Hussars.¹⁵¹ Her native place was County Wicklow, where she was born in 1808, but she was raised in

¹⁴⁷ Trustringham, *Women of the Regiment*, p. 144.

¹⁴⁸ Trustringham, *Women of the Regiment*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁴⁹ Trustringham, *Women of the Regiment*, p. 146.

¹⁵⁰ TAHO CON40/1/7, Hannah Mathers (195M) per *Edward* (1834), image 98.

¹⁵¹ TAHO CON40/1/10, Ellen Scott (510S) per *Hope* (1842), image 75.

the East Indies, which suggested that she may have been born into a military family. She did not accuse her husband of abandoning her but she confessed to a number of thefts and periods in detention. She had only been on the town for three months when she was tried in Antrim for the theft of a Fustian jacket. Regardless of her past, Surgeon-Superintendent Richard Lewis believed that she was an industrious and orderly woman who had joined the Temperance Movement.

Jonathan Mc Gill was in the Royal Artillery in Antigua, but his wife Sarah was a ‘common prostitute’ in Northumbria.¹⁵² By her own admission she had spent three years on the town and had four arrests for disorderly behaviour before she was transported for stealing four pounds from a man in the street. Originally from Carlisle, Sarah stated that, ‘I can do anything about a farmhouse, milk, make cheese, butter, I was 10 years at one and do any kind of work’.¹⁵³ With such qualifications she was assigned as a country servant to Mr. Young at the Ouse River and served a law abiding sentence within the colony. Ann Gale’s common-law husband was also a soldier but his regiment had moved to China.¹⁵⁴ It was probably part of the large British contingent which arrived there in June 1840 to seize Canton and secure a British victory in the First Opium War (1839-1842). The 1840s were particularly distressing years for a woman to be alone. They were dubbed ‘the hungry 40s’ and Ann had spent most of 1841 on the town. She was transported in 1842 for stealing six shillings and denied any previous conviction although her gaol report stated the contrary. By the 1850s when the British economy had improved Ann had remarried and was a free woman with a blameless colonial record.¹⁵⁵

Such was the plight of women who had legally married soldiers. But the cautionary tales of moral reformers were more likely to depict frivolous young women who were foolishly seduced by a uniform. Hemyng believed that soldiers’ low pay prevented them from employing professional women to gratify their passions, and that the prostitutes who they could afford were likely carriers of venereal disease. He knew of soldiers who therefore ‘formed very reprehensible connections with women’ whereby an innocent

¹⁵² TAHO CON40/1/3, Sarah McGill (71G) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 246.

¹⁵³ ML TP D3 Reel CY 1195, Indent for the *Sovereign*.

¹⁵⁴ TAHO CON15/1/2, Indents of female convicts 1831-1853 (*Royal Admiral*) (online); TAHO CON40/1/4, Ann Gale (also Mary Ann Goodwin) (294G) per *Royal Admiral* (1842), image 204.

¹⁵⁵ TAHO RGD37/1/4, Register-General’s Department, Register of Marriage (1620), Ann Gale to Richard Brown (free), 13 June 1845), Hobart.

young girl became a 'soldier's woman' and her downfall was assured.¹⁵⁶ William Tait also knew that an infatuation for a soldier could be the path to ruin since,

Females, on the smallest hint, follow them when they leave one station for another, in the prospect of being ultimately married, but soon find themselves disappointed ... the consequence of which is, that those who follow them must either return to their friends, and suffer under the affront and damage which their reputation has sustained, or throw themselves on the town as common girls.¹⁵⁷

Grace Neilson refused to be left behind when the army marched, so her gaoler in Newcastle was forthright in enumerating Grace's sins. He wrote that she had

followed a Dragoon Regt. from Scotland in the early part of the year 1825 and bore a bastard child to one of the private soldiers, which Child is still living & now maintained by this Parish. She very soon commenced prostitute & Pick Pocket [*sic*].¹⁵⁸

Grace's confession to having spent seven years on the town would suggest that her path into prostitution was the road from Scotland to Newcastle.¹⁵⁹ Eliza Ross claimed that she lived for ten months with a soldier called William Hulston.¹⁶⁰ In the same interview she confessed to spending eighteen months on the town. The order of these events is unclear but William visited her in gaol and she bore his surname as well as her maiden name. Yet she denied being married when she arrived in Van Diemen's Land, so she may have had an eye on future marriage prospects.

Hemyng learned of the fate of a woman who co-habited with a sailor, when he interviewed a prostitute in Bluegate Fields.¹⁶¹ He judged the woman to be naturally slow and stupid with a pale face which was utterly expressionless. When her sailor died

¹⁵⁶ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 235.

¹⁵⁷ Tait, *Magdalenism*, p. 99.

¹⁵⁸ TAHO CON40/1/7, Grace Nielson (51N) per *William Bryan* (1833), image 138.

¹⁵⁹ I have chosen not to examine the subject of women who were 'camp followers' because while some women in this study may have operated as such there is no reliable evidence within the convict records to suggest they were so occupied at the time of their sentence to transportation. For study on this topic see, Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*; Maria Luddy, 'An Outcast Community: the "wrens" of the Curragh', *Women's History Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1992), pp. 341-355, online: <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/09612029200200014>

¹⁶⁰ TAHO CON40/1/7, Eliza (Elizabeth) Ross (147R) also Hulston or Houston, per *Hector* (1835), image 310.

¹⁶¹ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 232.

of yellow fever in the West Indies ‘China Emma’ was left destitute.¹⁶² Her sobriquet, the legacy of a more recent association with a ‘Chinaman called Appoo’, completed her degradation. But China Emma had at times enjoyed a comfortable existence as a sailor’s woman and Hemyng admitted that sailors’ women were ‘at times well off, but at others, through their improvidence and the slackness of the shipping, immersed in poverty.’¹⁶³ Judith Walkowitz came to the same conclusion when she studied prostitution in Plymouth. The living standards of prostitutes in that city where the clientele included a high proportion of sailors, appeared much higher than that of the women who Frances Finnegan surveyed in York, where soldiers and labourers visited the prostitutes. Not only was the living standard higher for the former group, but fewer entered rescue homes.¹⁶⁴

Less was written about women who were legally married to sailors. Mary Ann Davis was classified on her gaol report as a prostitute and she explained that her husband was at sea and that she had not seen him for four years.¹⁶⁵ Her twins were at Norwood with her mother-in-law Mrs Richardson and her admission that they would be three years old next August put their paternity into question. She last lived with Mrs Sanders at Mile End Road who may have been her employer since Mary Ann’s trade was that of housemaid and laundress. When Mary Ann stole a sovereign and brooch from Thomas Walker a journeyman hatter from Long Lane Bermondsey, it suggested that she may have been working as a prostitute and stealing from her client. She was ill during the voyage on the *Mermaid* and told the surgeon-superintendent that she had been spitting blood for the past eight months. Although he noted her recovery in his sick list, it was only temporary for on arrival in the colony Mary Ann entered the Female Factory for further treatment. The following year her master Mr Clayton returned her to the Factory as she was physically incapable of performing any labour.

Monitors were necessary on female transports to ensure the smooth running of the ship. So when Mary Ann Guy, boarded the *Lady of the Lake* she was appointed as overseer

¹⁶² Hemyng, ‘Prostitution in London’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 232.

¹⁶³ Hemyng, ‘Prostitution in London’, in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 233.

¹⁶⁴ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, pp. 195, 307 (footnote 18); Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (Cambridge, 1979).

¹⁶⁵ TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary Ann Davis (85D) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 49.

on one side of the prison where she supervised the cleaning and routine tasks.¹⁶⁶ Her aptitude at sea may have been taken for granted since her husband William was a sailor on the *Raley* man-of-war and according to Surgeon-Superintendent Evans her appointment was well judged.¹⁶⁷ Mary Ann was convicted at Southampton, where she probably resided and made her living on the town while her husband was at sea. Her association with the Royal Navy extended to the theft of a five pound note from a sailor, for which she was sentenced to transportation. On Mr Evans' recommendation she was assigned as a servant to the Reverend Mr Bedford in Hobart Town.¹⁶⁸

Yet another sailor's wife was bound for Van Diemen's Land. Jane Smith's husband William was a mate on the *Garton*. Jane was tried at Kingston-upon-Hull so had stayed close to her native Beverley. She spent two years on the town during which time she had been gaoled and earned a reputation for 'Drunkenness, her thefts occasioned by that vice'.¹⁶⁹ When prosecuted by Mr Britton for stealing a bonnet and a sheet, she was sentenced to seven years transportation. While drunkenness was no longer an option, the surgeon-superintendent on the *Nautilus* declared that 'she smokes and swears', and that she was 'a great gambler'.¹⁷⁰

Emily Turner had no hesitation in explaining her move into prostitution. She told the clerk who recorded her statement that, 'I lived on the Town since my Husband was Transported'.¹⁷¹ Left behind in Surrey, she had been imprisoned for disorderly conduct before being convicted of stealing money, two watches and other articles. She could read and write and Surgeon-Superintendent Donovan on the *Rajah* considered her conduct to be orderly. Ann Turton was another who turned to prostitution and drink after her husband David was transported to Van Diemen's Land. Her *Gaol Report* stated that she was an 'Idle Drunken indifferent character [who] has supported herself by prostitution & theft.'¹⁷² The three years which she spent on the town coincided with her husband's absence.

¹⁶⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal for the *Lady of the Lake* (1829) Surgeon-Superintendent William Evans.

¹⁶⁷ TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary Ann Guy (85G) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 253.

¹⁶⁸ ML TP 28 CY 1280, Appropriation list for the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

¹⁶⁹ TAHO CON40/1/10, Jane Smith (355S) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 23.

¹⁷⁰ TAHO CON40/1/10, Jane Smith (355S) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 23.

¹⁷¹ TAHO CON40/1/10, Emily Turner (174T) per *Rajah* (1841), image 124.

¹⁷² TAHO CON40/1/10, Ann Turton (139T) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 112.

When William Powell was transported to Van Diemen's Land on the *Layton*, he left behind his common-law wife Eliza Waterman.¹⁷³ They had been together for five years, and on arrival William stated that he was married and had one child.¹⁷⁴ Eliza supported herself and their child over the next five years by prostitution, occasional theft and uttering base coin. She was finally convicted at Devon for stealing money from the person and embarked on the *Hydery* with her seven year old. On board she was one of many women described simply as 'orderly' and her trade was listed as a house servant. But what was not recorded was the determination which drove Eliza to restore her family unit. It took seven years and 13,000 miles, but on 28 July 1834 she finally married William Powell thereby legalising their common-law marriage.¹⁷⁵

Sarah Lythgowe demonstrated the same resourcefulness by following her husband William to Van Diemen's Land.¹⁷⁶ She had spent eighteen months on the town and told her interrogator on arrival that she had one child and that her husband was a brickmaker who had been sentenced to fourteen years transportation. At that time she narrowly avoided being transported herself, so her current conviction may have been an effort to redress that. Sarah arrived in 1836 and once reunited in Van Diemen's Land the Lythgows added another four children to their family.

Two months was all that Ann Bartlett spent on the town before she received her only conviction for theft. Her husband Michael Duffey had already been found guilty of larceny and sent to the *Leviathan* hulk in Portsmouth Harbour. Ann sailed on the *America* for Van Diemen's Land and Michael followed her a few months later on the *Argyle*.¹⁷⁷ Michael was questioned on arrival and he confirmed that he was married with one child and that his wife Ann had already arrived on the *America*.¹⁷⁸ Like Sarah Lythgowe and Eliza Waterman, Ann was reunited with her husband in Van Diemen's Land.

¹⁷³ TAHO CON40/1/9, Eliza Waterman (199W) per *Hydery* (1832), image 322.

¹⁷⁴ TAHO CON31/1/34, William Powell (444P) per *Layton* (1827), image 156.

¹⁷⁵ TAHO RGD36/1/2, Register-General's Department, Register of Marriage (2673), Eliza Waterman to William Powell, 28 July 1834, Campbell Town.

¹⁷⁶ TAHO CON40/1/6, Sarah Lythgowe (161L) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 210. It is also spelt Lythgo and Lythgow. For the story of the Lythgowe family see, Alison Alexander, *Brighton and Surrounds: a history of Bagdad, Bridgewater, Brighton, Broadmarsh, Dromedary, Elderslie, Mangalore, Old Beach, Pontville and Tea Tree* (Gagebrook [Tasmania], 2006), pp. 53, 56.

¹⁷⁷ TAHO CON40/1/1, Ann Bartlett (191B) per *America* (1831), image 163.

¹⁷⁸ TAHO CON31/1/10, Michael Duffey (687D) per *Argyle* (1831), image 61.

When women stated that their husbands had also been transported, it prompts a closer investigation of their records. The later entries on many conduct records and the birth registers suggest that for some women the transportation system served as a family reunion scheme. How aware the Home Office was of this practice is uncertain and it may have been a mutually beneficial outcome. But any official acknowledgement would have severely jeopardised the image of transportation as a deterrent to crime. Whether the women deliberately orchestrated their transportation is uncertain, but it is evident that many turned to prostitution when their husbands were arrested.

William Tait noted the plight of widowed mothers and in so doing he expressed a compassionate understanding of prostitution and poverty. He thought that maybe a widow alone could survive on the meagre funds from charitable institutions, but it was impossible when she had children to feed. That need meant that,

Women might suffer much themselves from want and oppression before having recourse to immoral means ... but few mothers could long endure to hear the cries of their hungry children, without making sacrifices to which nothing else would cause them to submit.¹⁷⁹

To relieve their suffering Tait recommended an increase in the widows' allowance thus removing the need for them to work and leave their children unattended.¹⁸⁰

The *Westminster Review* published an article on prostitution which quoted the respected French authority, Dr. Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet and observed that,

It is difficult to believe the trade of prostitution should have been embraced by certain women as a means of fulfilling their maternal or filial duties – nothing, however, is more true. It is by no means rare to see married women, widowed, or deserted by their husbands, and in consequence deprived of all support, become prostitutes with the sole object of saving their family from dying of hunger.¹⁸¹

In Glasgow the Reverend Wardlaw also understood that recourse to prostitution could have been caused by 'the impulse of *natural affection*, in order to the maintenance of

¹⁷⁹ Tait, *Magdalenism*, p. 112.

¹⁸⁰ Tait, *Magdalenism*, p. 113.

¹⁸¹ 'Prostitution', *Westminster Review*, p. 460.

families and of other relations'.¹⁸² Yet he declared himself to be uncharitable and saw in those women a 'palpable deficiency of right principle', and a positively vicious inclination.¹⁸³ Professor James Miller gave widows a cursory mention, implying that their widowhood was of less interest than their corresponding plight as needlewomen.¹⁸⁴ In describing the distress of a slop seamstress her widowhood was similarly afforded less attention.¹⁸⁵ But to Hemyng, the dependents of prostitutes were not children or a family unit, but bawds, pimps, procuresses, fancy men and bullies.¹⁸⁶

When Betsey Irwin left her native Tyrone she may have accompanied her husband as they sought work in England's industrial north, or she may have made the migration as a single woman.¹⁸⁷ But she was left without support when her husband was killed on the Manchester railroad. The twenty four year old widow spent two years on the town in Lancaster until her second conviction for theft brought her to Van Diemen's Land on the *Royal Admiral* in 1842. Her colonial plans must have included an end to widowhood because within a year of arriving she received permission to marry John Larkom. The marriage did not occur, and while no reason was given, Betsey's conduct record probably holds the answer. Shortly after receiving her permission to marry, Betsy was punished for being drunk and disorderly. It was her first colonial offence but delayed her marriage plans.¹⁸⁸ Undaunted, she reapplied and married Abraham Spratley eight months later.¹⁸⁹

Ann Murphy had been widowed for four years and those four years had been spent on the town to support her three children.¹⁹⁰ An Irish Catholic, she was quick to clarify her children's legitimacy when she stated that she had been married by Father Sullivan of

¹⁸² Wardlaw, *Lectures on Female Prostitution*, p.109. (Italics in original)

¹⁸³ Wardlaw, *Lectures on Female Prostitution*, p.109.

¹⁸⁴ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, p.16.

¹⁸⁵ Miller, *Prostitution Considered*, p.7.

¹⁸⁶ Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p. 246.

¹⁸⁷ TAHO CON40/1/6, Betsey Irwin (66I) per *Royal Admiral* (1842), image 105.

¹⁸⁸ This record reveals a more lenient attitude towards the marriage of female convicts than was the case under the rule of Governor Arthur. Arthur told the Select Committee on Transportation that women were not permitted to marry until they had served an assignment for at least two or three years. *British Parliamentary Papers Report from the Select Committee on Transportation Together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index, Crime and Punishment, Transportation*, 2 (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 312, evidence of Lieutenant George Arthur.

¹⁸⁹ TAHO CON52/1/2, Index to convicts applications for permission to marry 1829-1857', p. 427 (Spratley), and p. 108 (Larkom); TAHO RGD37/1/3, Register-General's Department, Register of Marriages (857), Betsey Irwin to Robert Spratley, 19 June 1844, Launceston.

¹⁹⁰ TAHO CON40/1/7, Ann Murphy (137M) per *America* (1831), image 71.

Banding, Cork. The theft which brought her to Van Diemen's Land could have been her first attempt to escape from prostitution, since she was previously unknown at Newgate. She stole twenty sovereigns from Robert Wallace, a mariner. He was drunk for much of the night in question, and stated that rather than going to a house with Ann, they went down Gravel-lane. When he awoke next morning, he was in the watch house and his purse and money were missing. Ann's defence was garbled and contradictory and she was easily convicted of the theft.¹⁹¹ Two and a half years spent on the town coincided precisely with Jane Jones' two and a half years of widowhood.¹⁹² But Jane was unable to support herself and her child and theft finally brought her to Van Diemen's Land on the *Westmoreland* in 1836. When apprehended at St Luke's for the theft of a pail, she admitted that she had stolen simply through want and to get lodgings. Jane made no attempt to plead her innocence but told her trial judge, 'I was in great distress'.¹⁹³

Deborah Oxley found that young, single Irish women were highly mobile and moved not only between counties in search of work but also spread throughout the United Kingdom.¹⁹⁴ A high proportion of young Irish women also married soldiers and relocated with their husbands.¹⁹⁵ Such findings were pre-empted in the 1960s when Lloyd Robson claimed that 46 per cent of all Irish female prisoners were tried in a county outside their birthplace, and he singled out London and Lancashire as favoured destinations.¹⁹⁶ Large urban centres drew women seeking employment and marriage opportunities. When their hopes were disappointed, those same centres drew single women seeking charity.¹⁹⁷

Some young women may have craved the anonymity of larger towns away from the 'suffocating demands of kin and community'.¹⁹⁸ But those aspirations, whether realised or not, removed the women from their social networks, where not only did they

¹⁹¹ *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913* online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18301209-110-verdict638&div=t18301209-110#highlight>, 9 December 1830, p. 59 (31 July 2011).

¹⁹² TAHO CON40/1/6, Jane Jones (137J) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 115.

¹⁹³ *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913* online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18360713-1495-verdict-1&div=t18360713-1495#highlight>, 13 July 1836, pp. 101-102 (31 July 2011).

¹⁹⁴ Oxley, *Convict Maids*, pp. 134-135.

¹⁹⁵ Trustring, *Women of the Regiment*, p. 38.

¹⁹⁶ Lloyd Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia, An Enquiry into the Origin and Character of the Convicts Transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1787-1852* (Melbourne, 1976), p. 74.

¹⁹⁷ Pinches, 'Women as Objects and Agents of Charity', p. 67.

¹⁹⁸ Daniels, *Convict Women*, p. 52.

relinquish the protection of family members particularly fathers and brothers, but also their extended community. Those who left rural areas lost a wider welfare net and access to local food production, and as new immigrants to a parish they were ineligible for parish relief.¹⁹⁹ Although parishes were legally obliged to grant a woman settlement in her native place or that of her husband, it was not always feasible. Some women had no desire to return to their native parish, while others were unwilling to pursue a denied claim through legal channels. Thus no settlement or even a disputed settlement left some women destitute. Prostitution may have been the only alternative for survival in places like Dublin, Manchester, Liverpool, and London.²⁰⁰

Margaret Heling had left her parents in Cork City when she journeyed to London.²⁰¹ Her father was a carpenter who worked for Mr Paine in Patrick Street and Margaret had been taught to read and write. She was only twenty two when convicted of stealing from Thomas Thomas, a tailor at Smithfield. He was adamant that he had no conversation or dealings with Margaret when she stole his four shillings, one sixpence, and four halfpence. Such denials usually accompanied the statements of clients/victims like Thomas, who pleaded a wife and family as evidence of his respectability.²⁰² Margaret's previous position had been as a housemaid to Mr Davis, a corn dealer in Holborn but her gaoler listed her as a prostitute.

When Sarah Firth left her family in County Cork she lived with Donald Kerrick an actor at Pentonville. Sarah disclosed her colourful past when she boarded the *Emma Eugenia* in 1842.²⁰³ She had spent the past two years on the town when she stole a purse, a bank note and a sovereign from Christopher Bell a sailor on the *Chandois*. Bell offered Sarah four shillings to accompany her home to 10 Vinegar Lane, but she disappeared during the night with the rest of his money. Sarah's colonial life however belied her criminal past. Her record was blameless after she was assigned as nursemaid to Mrs Darling at Bagdad. The year after she arrived she married William Clark in Hobart Town, an event

¹⁹⁹ Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 134.

²⁰⁰ Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 112. Oxley found that 2/5 of migrants in the United Kingdom moved to these centres.

²⁰¹ TAHO CON40/1/5, Margaret Heling (124H), per *Harmony* (1829), image 66.

²⁰² *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913*, online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18280703-198-defend1105&div=t18280703-198#highlight>, 3 July 1828, pp. 80-81, (31 July 2011).

²⁰³ TAHO CON40/1/4, Sarah Firth (214F) per *Emma Eugenia* (1842), image 140.

which may have been hastened by the imminent birth of Charles William.²⁰⁴ Six years into her fourteen year sentence she received a conditional pardon.

The examination of conditions which were likely to force a woman into prostitution failed to countenance that it could be a conscious and legitimate career choice for a woman who was neither seduced, nor abandoned nor indeed 'bred in sin'. If nineteenth-century observers pondered the possibility of women making a considered and voluntary choice, it was usually attributed to a viciousness of character. But prostitution may not have always been a desperate final resort. It offered a trade but without some of the restrictions. If no pimps were involved, and Walkowitz's research suggests that in nineteenth-century Britain the industry was largely devoid of pimps, then the woman was her own boss and dictated her own working hours.²⁰⁵ No training, set up costs, or equipment was required other than her body. Prostitution offered some advantages to poor working women such as,

having pin money and access to the pub – the only facility in the working class neighbourhood that provided heat, light, cooked food, and sociability – certainly afforded the prostitute a degree of comfort shared by few other women in her community.²⁰⁶

It may have been an aspiration for a higher standard of living, or a desire for independence from family control and greater social and cultural freedom which prompted the choice.²⁰⁷ But there were of course downsides, one of which was the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. While not dismissing the physical danger, the women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land did not walk the gas-lit streets and lanes of Jack the Ripper's London.

George Drysdale presented an atypical view of prostitution. He did not doubt those causes which his contemporaries highlighted, but he also apportioned blame to a society which ignored the powerful sexual passions which were present in young unmarried

²⁰⁴ TAHO RGD32/1/3, Register-General's Department, Register of Baptisms (2135), Charles William Clark, 12 August 1843, Hobart Town.

²⁰⁵ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 25.

²⁰⁶ Walkowitz and Walkowitz, 'We Are Not Beasts of the Field', p. 83, citing Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, p. 47.

²⁰⁷ Walkowitz and Walkowitz, 'We Are Not Beasts of the Field', p. 83.

people.²⁰⁸ He believed that the moral code in England which prohibited pre-marital sex, encouraged 'solitary indulgence', an activity which to Drysdale was beyond the pale.²⁰⁹ Thus prostitution or 'mercenary love' was preferable to 'solitary indulgence'.²¹⁰ England's stricter moral code was therefore seen to be responsible for a far greater demand for prostitutes than on the Continent where the general morals of women were laxer.²¹¹ So while Drysdale still considered prostitution to be an evil, he approached the issue from a different direction. It was 'a valuable temporary substitute for a better state of things'.²¹²

Conclusion

During the nineteenth century discussion on prostitution was characterised by contradiction and confusion – indicative of ignorance, and a lack of control over what was perceived as a growing problem. This dissonance was also present in the search for causes of prostitution. The findings were anchored in a rapidly changing society where theories of politics, religion, piety, and charity vied for supremacy. Amid that confusion it was tempting to seize on clearly defined, visible explanations for the causes of prostitution; explanations which resonated with those contemporary concerns.

Many of the causes of prostitution which social commentators identified were reflected in the convict records of Van Diemen's Land in that occupational and life cycle crises were evident in the statements which women made on arrival. Their occupations were vulnerable to economic shifts and when support networks failed some found that prostitution was their only means of survival. But women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land were not typical of those depicted in the literature. The significant difference was that women in this study had been removed from the situation which prompted their entry into prostitution. That removal was reliant firstly upon the fact that they had been convicted of a crime, and secondly because their health was superior to many women who remained on Britain's streets. Their pre-transportation medical examination

²⁰⁸ Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, pp. 269-270.

²⁰⁹ Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, p. 240.

²¹⁰ Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, pp. 239-240.

²¹¹ Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, p. 242.

²¹² Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, p. 270.

established their healthy state, since the health and well being of women destined for Van Diemen's Land was of vital concern to the British authorities. Responsibility for their health fell to yet another middle-class male, but he was not motivated to explain the prostitute nor primarily to save her soul. The ship's surgeon-superintendent had unprecedented access to women who had turned to prostitution and his journal helped to further document their lives.

CHAPTER 4: DISPATCHED TO VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

THE VOYAGE: SHIPBOARD ROUTINE

Introduction: Elizabeth Taylor's story

The femur was snapped above her left knee. Elizabeth lay in a daze of pain, nausea and fear. In moments of consciousness the pitching of the deck would have reminded her that she was on the female convict ship *Sovereign*, three months out from London and bound for Van Diemen's Land.¹ But the nausea which accompanied her moments of consciousness was unlike the earlier bouts of sea sickness which had plagued her in those first weeks as they made their way down the Thames and into the English Channel.² No longer was her mind on the rations which had brought her to the after hatchway on the quarter deck to queue with the other mess matrons. Instead her mind drifted back to an earlier fall which had left Elizabeth with a scar on her left cheek above and below her eye.³ Since that day she had usually employed caution when negotiating steps.

Elizabeth Taylor was born in 1802, in the dirty, bustling overcrowded metropolis of London and since her conviction was recorded in Middlesex, it seems likely that all of her twenty five years were spent among the familiar streets of the capital. In the gaol as she awaited trial for stealing a watch from Thomas Day, her record was annotated with the word 'prostitute', a label which was to follow her to Van Diemen's Land.⁴ In Elizabeth's case the label seemed accurate since Day described how they went to

¹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Elizabeth Taylor (42T) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 171.

² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827) Surgeon-Superintendent Robert Malcolm.

³ ML TP D3 CY1195, Indent for the *Sovereign*.

⁴ ML TP 22 CY 1274, List of 81 Female Convicts embarked on the Ship *Sovereign*.

Wood's mews and, 'I did not lay down – I was standing up.'⁵ He claimed that no deal had been made but he gave her 1/6. To have reached the age of twenty five and recorded only two convictions suggests that Elizabeth was either an accomplished thief, a successful prostitute, or regularly employed as a housemaid which was the trade recorded on her indent.

But however cautious, Elizabeth could not anticipate the heave of the *Sovereign* that October morning as it pitched and dipped into another wave. While the women eventually found their sea legs and conquered their seasickness, many would never train their bodies to move with ease upon a constantly rolling vessel nor to negotiate the ladders which provided access to the different levels of the ship. In July Ann Peaviott had laid open her head when she fell down the ladder of the fore hatch.⁶ The following month Elizabeth Vick failed to negotiate the main hatchway, badly bruising her left leg, and only a few days ago Elizabeth Perry had sprained her right ankle on the same hatchway.⁷ Now as Elizabeth slipped down the last few steps of the after-ladder her left leg twisted and she felt the wrenching of bone. Thus Surgeon-Superintendent Robert Malcolm switched from his supervision of food allocation to the examination and immobilisation of Elizabeth's badly fractured limb.

The *Sovereign* was an ambivalent space, a lacuna where women were relieved of the responsibility for their daily survival. In this watery isolation women like Elizabeth Taylor, Sarah Peaviott and Elizabeth Vick no longer walked the streets to provide for their basic needs. They now had regular meals, a safe place to sleep and plenty of fresh air and sunshine. And they had Dr. Malcolm to provide twenty four hour medical care. After 1815 surgeons were selected from the Royal Navy, given the title of surgeon-superintendent and appointed to accompany convict transports to the Australian colonies. This decision saw a marked decline in morbidity and mortality on convict ships leaving Britain for the colonies.⁸ Surgeons-superintendent had significant

⁵ *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913* online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/images.jsp?doc=182704050055>, 5 April 1827, p. 55, (23 August 2011).

⁶ TAHO CON40/1/7, Rebecca Peaviott (53P) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 189.

⁷ TAHO CON40/1/9, Elizabeth Vick (6V) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 217; TAHO CON40/1/7, Elizabeth Perry (55P) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 190. She was not identified as a prostitute and therefore is not part of the database.

⁸ For detailed studies on the influence of the surgeons-superintendent see R V Jackson, 'Sickness and Health on Australia's Female Convict Ships, 1821-1840', *International Journal of Maritime History*, vol.

authority and responsibility for the general care and well being of the prisoners, which included not only medical matters but the supervision of rations, cleaning of the ship and discipline. Sir John Franklin summarised the role:

His task is one of the most anxious and onerous description; unassisted, he has to preserve discipline and order in a body of 100 to 200 lawless women, of whom he is at once the keeper, the officer of the commissariat, the physician, the schoolmaster, and the minister of religion.⁹

Hence the role of the surgeon-superintendent on a female convict ship was both complex and mutable with a cultural and gendered chasm separating him from the prisoner. He judged her through a gradually evolving middle-class ideology in which 'women were encouraged to display no vanity, no passion, no assertive "self" at all.'¹⁰ The reality was more often a loud, ungovernable, independent female - a consummate survivor for whom the surgeon-superintendent, much like a father, husband, lover, clergyman, constable or magistrate, was just another man who could aid or impede that survival. He was a man who could often be manipulated or at least accommodated at some level. Joy Damousi identified the relationship as one shaped by the interplay between masculine paternalism and assertive femininity but one in which women could deal with surgeons in ways not available to male convicts.¹¹ The voyage not only provided for prisoners' basic needs but it also offered an opportunity to receive a rudimentary education and the certainty of a daily routine of gainful employment.

But against these apparent advantages, women faced the terrifying uncertainty of an unknown future. Thus a female transport was an emotionally-charged space, where the human body was physically nurtured, yet vulnerable to the suffering of mental

18, no. 2 (2006), pp. 65-84; Ian Brand and Mark Staniforth, 'Care and Control: Female Convict Transportation Voyages to Van Diemen's Land, 1818-1853', *The Great Circle* (Australian National Maritime Museum), vol. 13, no. 2 (1991), pp. 23-42; John McDonald and Ralph Sholowitz, 'Mortality on Convict Voyages to Australia 1788-1868', *Social Science History*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Autumn, 1989), pp. 285-313; Donald R McNeil, 'Medical Care Aboard Australia-Bound Convict Ships, 1786-1840', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 26 (1952), pp. 117-140.

⁹ John Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin on Female Convicts, Van Diemen's Land, MDCCC XLIII Addressed to the Secretary of State, Lord Stanley, 4 June 1843* (Sullivan's Cove, 1996), pp. 38-39.

¹⁰ Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago, 1984), p. 21.

¹¹ Joy Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 27-28.

psychosis. Such vulnerability Surgeon-Superintendent Malcolm observed in Sarah Wassal when she boarded from Southampton.¹² While he could offer Elizabeth Taylor a high level of medical care, he could do little to ease the mental pain of transportation which afflicted women like Sarah.¹³

With little hope of repatriation, they were separated from all that was familiar and cherished: spouses, children, parents, and siblings. That burden could be read through the entries on their convict records. And in case the women had not yet grasped the enormity of their loss, surgeons-superintendent like Thomas Reid reminded them that,

Our native land, containing the scenes of youthful amusements and innocent pleasures, abandoned perhaps for ever! the dear ties by which nature had united you to your families, relations and friends must become lacerated; yes, to be compelled to separate from parents, children and husbands, dear as life, and to be parted from them forever, is, it must be confessed, a truly bitter thought.¹⁴

For some women, prostitution had been the only means of maintenance for those they left behind, and now survival for their dependants was at best uncertain and at worst impossible.

A terror of the ocean and months upon its dangerous and unfamiliar waves may have taunted their waking and sleeping hours. Some had never before glimpsed the sea, and few would have expected to be reunited with their loved ones.¹⁵ The reports of 'death ships', and the suffering and cruelty which pervaded the popular image of convict transportation to Australia was established prior to 1815 when mortality was high, epidemics frequent, and the abuse of women well documented. But as Dilley pointed out, 90 per cent of the approximately 160,000 convicts who came to the Australian

¹² TAHO CON40/1/9, Sarah Wassel (103) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 274.

¹³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

¹⁴ Thomas Reid, *Two Voyages to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, With a Description of the Present Condition of that Interesting Colony: including Facts and Observations relative to the State and Management of Convicts of both Sexes also Reflections on Seduction and its General Consequences* (London, 1822), p. 104, online:

<http://archive.org/stream/twovoyagestonew00reidgoog#page/n30/mode/2up> (20 January 2010).

¹⁵ TAHO NS816/1, Abraham Harvey, *Reminiscences of a voyage to Hobart Town on board the Female Convict Ship Garland Grove, 1842-43* [Copy of the Original], no page on this page of the transcript.

colonies did so after 1815.¹⁶ But those improved conditions would have offered little consolation to women leaving their families. And judging by the words of Lieutenant George Arthur, the pain of separation was not relieved by months at sea. He told the Select Committee on Transportation that when they arrived, '[the] state of depression and agony they are in is scarcely to be described.'¹⁷

The surgeon-superintendent's journal was his report to the Admiralty, and since he was addressing his employer all entries must be considered within that context. So whether emanating from a compassionate reformer or a censorious moralist, the journal must be read as an application for continued employment and to secure his current gratuity. At the completion of the voyage, he was obliged to submit the regulation paperwork and a journal which adhered to a prescribed format. In exchange the surgeon-superintendent was granted a certificate which confirmed the completion of his contract, and his eligibility to return home.¹⁸ These he presented to his employers in England following which the gratuity was paid. For surgeons who lacked the professional inclination to keep detailed records, self-interest served to guarantee their compliance. That compulsion has yielded a valuable record not only of acute care and general health and well being, but also the daily routine on board convict transports. Therefore regardless of the motivation, the journals provide a unique and intimate snapshot of the women's lives, albeit one mediated through the eyes of the surgeon-superintendent.

Architecture of the ship

When Elizabeth lay in her hospital bed, she may have agreed with Robert Malcolm that women on the *Sovereign* 'are very rarely more commodiously accommodated during

¹⁶ Warwick Dille, 'Mortality on Convict Ships: The importance of the Surgeon Superintendents', *Descent*, vol. 32, no. 3 (September, 2002), p. 133 (citing A G L Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and Other Parts of the British Empire* (London, 1966 [Melbourne, 1981]), pp. 363-368.

¹⁷ *British Parliamentary Papers. Report from the Select Committee on Transportation together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index. Crime and Punishment – Transportation 2* (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 312, evidence of Lieutenant George Arthur.

¹⁸ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 349, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent of Convict Ships.

their passage to Australasia.’¹⁹ Unlike prisoners arriving in the early years, many women who were transported to Van Diemen's Land during the 1820s to the 1840s found that the environment below deck was neither cramped nor dark. As Surgeon-Superintendent Stewart wrote, ‘the *Nautilus* is a ship admirably adapted for the transportation of prisoners. The lower deck or prison is unusually high.’²⁰ Similarly the seven foot clearance under the beams of the *Westmoreland* meant that Surgeon-Superintendent James Ellis observed sufficient room for lofty berths and a good circulation of air.²¹ There were triangular stanchions (upright supports) around the hatchways leading from the lower to upper decks, which according to Mr Stewart on the *Nautilus*, measured between five and a half and six inches, with only two and a half to three inches between each. So in spite of the claim of lofty dimensions, he acknowledged that the flow of air to the women in the prison below could at times be seriously impaired. The *New Grove* was another ship which boasted comfortable accommodation but it allowed no provision for unforeseen events since every berth was occupied.²² On female transports those berths were located within the prison section which was entered by two small strong doors at the main and after hatchways which were locked at sunset.²³

There were usually two tiers of sleeping berths on each side of the prison, four abreast.²⁴ Sarah Wilkinson's berth was situated close to the fore hatchway on the *Persian* and Surgeon-Superintendent Patton believed that women sleeping in such positions were more exposed to changes of atmosphere than in any other part of the ship.²⁵ This could precipitate colds and pneumonic complaints, so when such symptoms troubled Sarah she was immediately transferred to the hospital and placed ‘in the best and most airy

¹⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

²⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838) Surgeon-Superintendent John G Stewart.

²¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/74 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Westmoreland* (1836) Surgeon-Superintendent James Ellis.

²² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3206, Journal of the *New Grove* (1835) Surgeon-Superintendent David Thomson.

²³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of *Nautilus* (1838).

²⁴ TAHO NS816/1, Harvey, *Reminiscences of a voyage to Hobart Town*, no number on the page of this copy.

²⁵ TAHO CON40/1/9, Sarah Wilkinson (95W) per *Persian* (1827), image 270.

cradle.’²⁶ Mary Page may have shared Sarah’s berth for she too was exposed to atmospheric changes as she slept close to the fore hatchway.²⁷ Her exposure caused rheumatic pains in her lower jaw, knee and ankle joint.²⁸

In cold weather bed curtains afforded the women some protection at night, and in extremely cold conditions a large stove and funnel were placed between the decks to generate warmth.²⁹ The prison also contained water closets for night use, whereas during the day an enclosed tub was provided on deck.³⁰ Stormy weather confined the women below, when activities such as divine service were transferred from the quarter deck to the prison.³¹ Tables and benches were often placed within that area and the provision of small burners allowed women to use their rations and share a cup of tea.³² On some female transports shelves were constructed to hold that tea-ware.³³ Thus the prison was not primarily a place of incarceration, although its doors were secured at night.

Locked below in nocturnal seclusion, the women had time to reflect on their loss, and fear for their future. It was also a time for establishing their credentials and enlisting allies; for companionship or sexual intimacy; to whisper, cry, hope and joke. Thomas Reid recounted that,

Shortly after retiring to rest last night, I was called up to go to the prison, whence, I was informed, very alarming cries and violent screams were issuing. I found most of the women so much frightened, as to make it difficult to ascertain from any one of them what had occasioned their trepidation. At length, the assertions of several gave me reason to believe, that some

²⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827) Surgeon-Superintendent James Patton.

²⁷ TAHO CON40/1/7, Mary Page (51P) per *Persian* (1827), image 188.

²⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

²⁹ Kim Humphery, ‘A New Era of Existence: Convict Transportation and the Authority of the Surgeon in Colonial Australia’, *Labour History*, no. 59 (1990), p. 65.

³⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838) Surgeon-Superintendent Peter Leonard.

³¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829) Surgeon-Superintendent William Evans.

³² Peter Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales Comprising Sketches of the Actual State of Society in that Colony; of its Particular Advantages to Emigrants; of its Topography, Natural History, &c &c*, vol. 11 (London, 1828), p. 260.

³³ Humphery, ‘A New Era of Existence’, p. 65.

one of the convicts had out of frolic walked round the prison,
and touched the faces of some of them with her cold hand.³⁴

In 1831 it cost the government approximately £29.1.0 to transport a woman to Van Diemen's Land compared to £25.6.0 for a man.³⁵ The extra fittings and provisions for children may have contributed to the disparity, but more likely it was the smaller number of women carried on each transport. Some female convict ships also contained a separate compartment for free women and their children.³⁶

William Evans criticised the size of the *Lady of the Lake*, since at 243 tons he believed it to be the smallest ship ever employed to convey prisoners.³⁷ The *Hector* at 325 tons was also small and its surgeon-superintendent marvelled that no illness of any consequence occurred during the voyage, considering the indifferent manner in which the prison and between decks were ventilated.³⁸ Perhaps the *Nautilus* came closer to the ideal. Her surgeon-superintendent reported,

the hatches very large, she carries the canvas well, and is remarkably dry on deck. She has no poop, a circumstance I believe usually considered unfavourable to a female ship, but in my opinion the reverse.³⁹

He offered suggestions to improve her poor ventilation and his advice may have benefited the *Rajah* where the heat between decks at night became oppressive when she sat becalmed near the equator. However the only ill effect was to severely try the women's temper.⁴⁰

Fresh air, which was considered essential to the prisoner's well being, was not only inhaled on deck but harnessed to ventilate the interior of the ship. Since medical opinion

³⁴ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 121.

³⁵ *British Parliamentary Papers, Reports from Select Committees on Financing Convict Establishments Erecting Penitentiary Houses and Other Matters Relating to Transportation and Secondary Punishments, Crime and Punishment, I* (Shannon [Ireland], 1969), p. 53, evidence of John Henry Capper Esquire.

³⁶ Humphery, 'A New Era of Existence', p. 65.

³⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829). Tonnage from Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships 1787-1868* (Artarmon [New South Wales], 1974), p. 360.

³⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/32 Reel 3197, Journal of the *Hector* (1835) Surgeon-Superintendent Morgan Price. Tonnage from Bateson, *Convict Ships*, p. 362.

³⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁴⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/63 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1842) Surgeon-Superintendent James Donovan.

held that 'miasmas' carried disease, proper ventilation was a priority.⁴¹ Wind-sails were directed down the hatchways during the night and side scuttles and deck ventilators along the ship's side increased air flow.⁴² As a further measure the women's personal possessions and clothing were stowed away in the hold so as not to impede the circulation of air. Thorough ventilation was considered essential to combat dampness.

Surgeons were alert to the harmful effects of a damp atmosphere and many worked assiduously to prevent such conditions. The *Borneo* was said to be 'very leaky' although the carpenter was constantly employed in caulking her sides. Surgeon-Superintendent Sproule was certain that had it not been for the vigilant use of the airing stove, and an extra supply of beds and bedding for those most exposed to the wet, the incidence of fever on board would have been much greater.⁴³ Coke stoves were kept burning in the prison and hospital of the *Atwick* to minimise the effects of damp weather. On the *Mary* the wind-sails were kept trimmed in the hatchways in fair weather, and in wet weather swing stoves were employed to assist drying. A warm, perfectly dry and well ventilated prison was the result. But fear of fire caused Mr Sinclair to abandon such tactics when water washed over the deck and into hatchways of the *Mary*.⁴⁴ William Evans complained that because the *Lady of the Lake* was constantly wet between decks, it was necessary to close the hatches thereby diminishing the atmosphere in the prison.⁴⁵

At times the imperative to maintain a dry atmosphere took precedence over punishment and discipline. While it was common to place women in the 'coal hole' for misconduct, the *Navarino's* surgeon-superintendent refused to do so because of its dampness.⁴⁶ A similar reluctance was shown by Mr Patton who complained that the *Persian* had no place suitable for solitary confinement. The hold was the only possible site but its damp

⁴¹ Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', p. 25.

⁴² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831) Surgeon-Superintendent Samuel Sinclair. Wind-sails were canvas funnels used to convey air to the lower parts of the ship.

⁴³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/12 Reel 3190, Journal of the *Borneo* (1828) Surgeon-Superintendent Oliver Sproule.

⁴⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

⁴⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

⁴⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841) Surgeon-Superintendent James L Clarke.

environment could bring on pulmonary and rheumatic complaints.⁴⁷ Yet a thorough soaking was considered less harmful, since on some ships a cistern of water was placed above the black punishment box to 'quell' the offender's protests.⁴⁸

Although they were prisoners, for most days the sky was their roof and their eyes met an endless horizon rather than the stone walls of a British prison. While the benefits of hours spent on deck were extolled, there were also dangers. The sea offered Sarah Wassal an escape from her troubled thoughts. Mr Malcolm reported that she had attempted to destroy herself by jumping overboard from the bow post.⁴⁹ That mental vulnerability which he had initially observed was manifest in an act of desperation. She was closely watched for the remainder of the voyage.⁵⁰

One space became a refuge for some women or a site of relentless suffering and misery for others. The hospital was reserved strictly for patients with infectious diseases or those who were bedridden, as women with slight complaints were nursed in their own berths.⁵¹ This important area was supervised by the surgeon-superintendent with the assistance of nurses or matrons who slept close to the patients and reported on their condition. A nurse on the *Persian* informed Mr Patton that Elizabeth Rowley's cough had been troublesome during the night.⁵² To Sarah Wassal it may have been a refuge during the two days after she was plucked from the sea by crewmen of the *Sovereign*. She was rubbed with warm flannels and given warm cordials which coaxed a gradual recovery, but since she suffered no physical infirmity, she was discharged from the hospital. For all his surgical skill, Surgeon-Superintendent Malcolm was unable to treat her 'mental functions'.⁵³ Elizabeth Taylor shared that same space but for her it was a site of relentless suffering. Elizabeth's fractured thigh required hospitalisation for the remaining six weeks of the voyage, after which she was transferred to the Colonial Hospital in Hobart Town. Malcolm had initially set her thigh by placing the edges of the

⁴⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

⁴⁸ Bateson, *Convict Ships*, p.76.

⁴⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

⁵⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

⁵¹ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 346, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent of Convict Ships.

⁵² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827); TAHO CON40/1/7, Elizabeth Rowley (54R) per *Persian* (1827), image 263.

⁵³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

bone into apposition, but the following night the ship pitched so heavily that the fracture was again displaced. The same occurred three days later. For the next week the sea continued to batter the *Sovereign* while Elizabeth lay in the hospital.⁵⁴

Women on the *Midas* were conscious of the importance of the hospital and respectful towards its inmates. Surgeon-Superintendent Cameron reported that 'the Females ... render me every assistance, and so general is the feeling among them that a loud word is not to be heard in the Prison for fear of disturbing the Sick in the Hospital.'⁵⁵ Mary Kitley was less respectful when she found a supply of opium in the *Borneo's* dispensary. She broke in and swallowed a large amount of the drug to ease her addiction. Perhaps she longed to return to a time when she shaped delicate artificial flowers to adorn the fashionable gowns of Warwick.⁵⁶ The opium gave Mary no such happy release, but rather the alarming symptoms of constant vomiting and intolerable itching over her whole body.⁵⁷

Embarkation and departure

Thus forty five female convict transports received the 1,779 prostitutes from the streets of Britain.⁵⁸ Unlike male prisoners who were held on hulks prior to transportation, the embarkation of women was often protracted as they arrived in groups from prisons, penitentiaries and county gaols. Women boarded the *Edward* over an eleven day period in April 1834.⁵⁹ They arrived fatigued and disoriented from as far away as Lancaster and York. Rachael Lewis, diminutive and dark haired, travelled from Swansea to join a shipload of women who spoke a language which was incomprehensible to her.⁶⁰ When Mary Diggle complained of swelling on the upper part of her right foot she attributed it to being ironed on her journey from Lancaster Gaol to the *Garland Grove*. The wound

⁵⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

⁵⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/53 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Midas* (1825) Surgeon-Superintendent Charles Cameron.

⁵⁶ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Kitley (51K) per *Borneo* (1828), image 250.

⁵⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/12 Reel 3190, Journal of the *Borneo* (1828).

⁵⁸ The number of 1,779 refers to the women who then disembarked in Van Diemen's Land.

⁵⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *Edward* (1834) Surgeon-Superintendent Joseph Street.

⁶⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *Edward* (1834); TAHO CON40/1/5, Rachael Lewis (135L) per *Edward* (1834), image 348.

became infected and formed a series of tumours which troubled her throughout the voyage.⁶¹

As early as 1801 it was official policy to discourage winter departures. Between the beginning of November and the end of March prisoners were observed to be in poor physical condition and the weather conditions were considered to be unfavourable for a voyage.⁶² Ships often made several attempts to clear the channel as they battled adverse prevailing winds. When the *Mermaid* left Woolwich in mid January, strong winds prevented her clearing Land's End for a further two weeks. Such difficult departures could not only drench the prisoners' sleeping quarters, but they could remain in that condition for weeks before the ship reached warmer waters.⁶³ The merit of different departure dates was a subject on which Surgeon-Superintendent Malcolm ruminated, although he was satisfied that the *Sovereign's* departure in early August was well chosen to minimise temperature fluctuations during the voyage. Mid July until mid September he considered the optimum departure times.⁶⁴

But winter or summer the health of the new arrivals was of vital concern to the surgeon-superintendent who had no desire to embark upon a voyage with women unfit to undertake it, or worse still carrying infectious diseases. A certificate from the medical officer of the gaol accompanied the prisoner and guaranteed her healthy condition. The instructions from Whitehall were clear,

Convicts, upon being examined by an experienced Surgeon or Apothecary, shall be found free from Pulmonary Consumption, Paralysis, Mania, Blindness, Epilepsy, Old Ulcers combined with diseased Bones, Inveterate Scrophula with Ulceration, Ophthalmia, Scald Head, Scurvy, and all putrid, infectious, or contagious Distempers; and in all respects fit to undergo a Voyage to Australia. Prisoners afflicted with any of the above Complaints, and Cripples requiring the aid of Crutches, must not be removed.⁶⁵

⁶¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Garland Grove* (1841) Surgeon-Superintendent Robert Dobie.

⁶² Bateson, *Convict Ships*, p. 19; Jackson, 'Sickness and Health', p. 72.

⁶³ Jackson, 'Sickness and Health', p. 72.

⁶⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

⁶⁵ Removal order from Whitehall for local authorities SRO SC 1/71/16, cited in Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, 'The Bushrangers and the Convict System of Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1846', A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh (1990), p. 42.

Prisoners then underwent a further medical examination by the ship surgeon-superintendent to confirm their fitness to undertake the journey. Ideally the surgeon-superintendent was to examine each convict in the presence of the gaol medical officer, but since women were usually despatched from the gaols this step was circumvented for female prisoners. Thus prison authorities were afforded the opportunity to rid themselves of sick or troublesome inmates. Sarah Parfitt's accompanying certificate from the penitentiary made no attempt to conceal her disability when it informed Surgeon-Superintendent Donovan that she was weak in intellect.⁶⁶

Experience had also warned Surgeon-Superintendent Stewart to be suspicious of the women themselves, for although a certificate was forthcoming from the gaol, women sometimes fabricated illnesses on board in a final attempt to escape transportation. Mr Sinclair suspected as much when he received Ellen Turner on the *Mary* in 1831. Ellen was 'Of an emaciated habit and Sickly appearance when Sent on board from Gloucester jail altho' a certificate of health from the Surgeon of that Prison reported her fit for the Voyage.'⁶⁷ Sinclair considered that her persistent diarrhoea may have been a ploy to delay her transportation.⁶⁸

In practice it is evident that many infirmities other than infectious diseases were overlooked although less frequently after the 1830s.⁶⁹ Whether or not the gaol certificate was accurate, it was ultimately the judgement of the ship surgeon-superintendent as to the likelihood of a prisoner surviving the voyage. That decision to accept or reject a prisoner was subject to Article 7 which cautioned against receiving on board anyone whose state of health was such that their lives would be endangered by the voyage or who carried infectious diseases.⁷⁰ It was at this stage that the prostitute or those of 'dissipated habits' first came to the notice of the surgeon-superintendent. Observing his newly arrived charges on board the *Nautilus*, James Stewart found that instead of having to decide whether prisoners 'were equal to the voyage, the question

⁶⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/64 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1842).

⁶⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

⁶⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

⁶⁹ Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, 'Crime and Health: an introductory view', in Paul Richards, Barbara Valentine and Tom Dunning (eds.), *Effecting a Cure: Aspects of Health and Medicine in Launceston*, (Launceston, 2006), p. 39.

⁷⁰ Bateson, *Convict Ships*, pp. 51-52.

was a much narrower one: whether any particular person was positively unfit; and unless this could be positively stated, the sentence of transportation must be made good.⁷¹ Stewart found it difficult to make hasty assessments about each woman's health. Some appeared unhealthy but after consulting their gaol records he learnt that they had been long term inmates of houses of correction. He concluded that a healthy routine could therefore be beneficial.⁷² Similar sentiments must have motivated Surgeon-Superintendent Forman who declared that the prisoners on the *Platina* were 'in general decidedly below par in healthy appearance and some to palpably be as to induce one to reject them altogether'.⁷³ Yet like his colleague on the *Nautilus*, Forman decided that their appearance could merely have been the result of the poor prison diet or the lengthy confinement which they had recently undergone.

The majority of women on the *Arab* were healthy with three exceptions, one of whom was Alice Dowland who had long suffered from venereal disease.⁷⁴ Her surgeon-superintendent warned that in many cases a cursory inspection or inquiry was of little benefit since diagnosis was often only achieved when a disease could no longer be concealed.⁷⁵ On the *Atwick* the women's health was pronounced to be tolerably good, except for those in a filthy condition whose strength was impaired by dissipation and chronic disease. Mr Jason Lardner found women on the *Woodbridge* to be similarly debilitated yet he was loath to reject any.⁷⁶

Surgeons-superintendent must have been uneasy when women came directly from a hospital or hospital ships to the transports, and deaths during the passage attest to unsound decisions made by British prison authorities. Rose Quinn had been a patient in the Belfast Infirmary before she boarded the *East London*, and her shipmate Ann Rae had also received treatment in the Belfast Hospital.⁷⁷ Both died en route to Van

⁷¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁷² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁷³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/60 Reel 3207, Journal of the *Platina* (1837) Surgeon-Superintendent George E Forman.

⁷⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/4 Reel 3188, Journal of the *Arab* (1836) Surgeon-Superintendent William Rogers; TAHO CON40/1/4, Alice Dowland (201D) per *Arab* (1836), image 6.

⁷⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/4 Reel 3188, Journal of the *Arab* (1836).

⁷⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/75 Reel 3213, Journal of the *Woodbridge* (1843) Surgeon-Superintendent Jason Lardner.

⁷⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843) Surgeon-Superintendent Edward Caldwell.

Diemen's Land. Elizabeth Rowley had suffered with a pulmonary complaint for three months before she embarked on the *Persian* yet Surgeon-Superintendent Patton acquiesced to her sailing.⁷⁸ James Donovan noted in the *Rajah* journal that one woman was convalescing from an acute disease, and he reluctantly accepted Lydia French who he described as an invalid. She was admitted to the ship's hospital and into the care of a nurse.⁷⁹

Rather than rejecting the sick, many surgeons-superintendent chose that option. When Mary Creed arrived from the prison in Horsemonger Lane it was disclosed that she suffered from a loss of power in her lower limbs and had been bedridden for three years. She spent the voyage in the *Edward's* hospital until Surgeon-Superintendent Street transferred her to the care of Dr Scott in Hobart Town.⁸⁰ Mary Donnelly was similarly accommodated on the *East London*, Surgeon-Superintendent Caldwell noting that she had arrived from Grange Gorman where she had informed the medical attendants of her venereal disease. He admitted her to his hospital, and prescribed an invalid diet.⁸¹ Four other women, all of whom died during the voyage on the *East London*, were also treated for primary or secondary syphilitic symptoms.⁸² When the surgeon-superintendent of the *Gilbert Henderson* joined his ship in November 1839 he found that eight women required medical treatment. Some appeared aged and infirm, and others were in a weak state, particularly those sent from the Penitentiary in London.⁸³

Samuel Sinclair recorded the arrival of a woman from the *Narcissus* hospital ship as the *Mary* waited at Woolwich, and the *Majestic* received a prisoner from the hospital ship *Unite* which was also anchored off Woolwich.⁸⁴ A determination to transport prisoners was evident in the records of Ann Richardson who was removed from the *Hindostan* in March 1839 suffering from scrofula. The sixteen year old had developed the condition in the Penitentiary while awaiting transportation. After being disembarked from the

⁷⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

⁷⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/64 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1842).

⁸⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *Edward* (1834).

⁸¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843).

⁸² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843). Sufferers from venereal disease who died were Mary Healy, Ann Rae, Mary Ann Holland, Rose Carroll and Rose Quinn.

⁸³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of *Gilbert Henderson* (1840) Surgeon-Superintendent Sir John Hamett.

⁸⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

Hindustan, she spent six more months in the Penitentiary where she was three times put onto the sick list. In November while still infirm, she boarded the *Gilbert Henderson*. Since the surgeon-superintendent was not due on board for another week, the absence of a medical certificate went unnoticed.⁸⁵

Women who were refused passage were despatched to the *Unite* and the *Narcissus* hospital ships. When Ann Murphy joined the *Majestic* from the Liverpool House of Correction she was immediately redirected to the *Unite*.⁸⁶ James Donovan had ten prisoners and two of their children removed from the *Rajah*, five by an order from the Home Office and the remaining five on the grounds of insanity. Subsequently three more women showed symptoms of 'derangement' and were admitted to the ship's hospital. Eventually they too were re-landed when their continuous uproar hindered attempts to establish order among the prisoners.⁸⁷ Similar symptoms were recorded by the surgeon-superintendent on the *Navarino* who refused to accept women suffering from 'Mania arising from the transition from the silent system pursued in the Penitentiary to one so opposite as is obliged to be followed in a ship.'⁸⁸ The surgeon-superintendent of the *Royal Admiral* obtained an order from Mr Capper with which he disembarked a mother and child to the hulk *Justinian* and a second woman to the Penitentiary.⁸⁹

The Admiralty specified that no prisoner should be rejected because of old age or bodily infirmity.⁹⁰ It was also stated that women should be less than forty five years old but as Deborah Oxley pointed out, that was more a guideline than a rule.⁹¹ And that is confirmed in the journals and description lists. The *America* transported six women in their fifties, seven of whom claimed to be forty five and a forty seven and a forty eight

⁸⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* (1840). The journal for the *Hindustan* has not survived so information about her removal from that ship comes from the journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* as she related her story to Surgeon-Superintendent Hamett.

⁸⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/46 Reel 3202, Journal of the *Majestic* (1839) Surgeon-Superintendent Peter Fisher.

⁸⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/64 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1842).

⁸⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841). Rachael McDonald was re-landed.

⁸⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/65 Reel 3209, Journal of the *Royal Admiral* (1842) Surgeon-Superintendent John R Roberts. Mr Capper was the Superintendent of Prison Hulks.

⁹⁰ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 345, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent of Convict Ships.

⁹¹ Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 109.

year old. One woman was listed as forty two, but the surgeon-superintendent believed her to be much older.⁹² On the *Gilbert Henderson* Ann McDermott was recorded as forty three but was actually sixty.⁹³ The *Hector* carried a sixty two year old, the *Mexborough* a seventy year old and Mary Spillane on the *East London* was seventy three years old. According to the journal, she died of old age.⁹⁴ The *Rajah* carried seven women between the ages of fifty and sixty. And although Grace Mc Millen was listed as twenty nine her case notes on the *Navarino* described her 'prematurely old appearance' which was attributed to her former mode of life being on the town since the age of fifteen.⁹⁵ She died en route. A sixty three year old woman, who was described as an emaciated creature, was accepted on the *Henry* as she was anxious to accompany her pregnant daughter.⁹⁶ Those examples are from the total population of women embarked on the ships, but within the cohort of women labelled as prostitutes it is also clear that age limits were ignored. The average age of women in this study was 22.67 years, but two women were in their 50s. One gave her age as fifty three and the second as fifty.⁹⁷ Three more transportees who were identified as prostitutes were aged forty five and older.⁹⁸

Once a prisoner was judged fit to undertake the voyage, she was allocated a mess of six to eight women with a monitor who was responsible for order, cleanliness, the supervision of rations, and the reading of Scriptures.⁹⁹ Women were then given their berth which included a flock mattress, blanket and pillow. Each berth measured six feet square (1.8 metres) and slept four to six women.¹⁰⁰ Such intimate sleeping arrangements

⁹² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1-2 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831) Surgeon-Superintendent Richard Lewis.

⁹³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* (1840).

⁹⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843).

⁹⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841).

⁹⁶ TAHO CON40/1/5, Rosanna Keenen (38K) per *Henry* (1825), image 243; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/33 Reel 3197, Journal of the *Henry* (1825) Surgeon Superintendent William B Carlyle. For details of the infirm arriving in Van Diemen's Land during this period see Chapter 6.

⁹⁷ TAHO CON40/1/2, Margaret Mc Auley (131A) per *Navarino* (1841) (age 50), image 16; TAHO CON 40/1/9, Margaret Tracey (64T) per *Eliza* (1830) (aged 53), image 182. When Margaret married fourteen years after arriving in the colony she gave her age as 62 suggesting a continued uncertainty.

⁹⁸ TAHO CON40/1/9, Esther Wells (158W) per *America* (1831) (aged 45), image 301; TAHO CON40/1/10 Mary Sanders (417S) per *Navarino* (1841) (aged 47), image 44; TAHO CON40/1/8, Elizabeth Millward (344M) per *Rajah* (1841), image 41 (aged 48).

⁹⁹ On the *Lady of the Lake* women were arranged into messes of six, PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

¹⁰⁰ Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*, p. 212. Cunningham is referring to male convicts but stated that conditions were the same for female convicts.

were problematic for Ellen Turner's mess mates on the *Mary*.¹⁰¹ Constant evacuations of her bowels which she apparently could not control meant that no one cared to be near her, much less share her berth.¹⁰²

Bedding was stamped with the number of each mess as were plates and water kegs.¹⁰³ Women were then issued with prison clothing which was designed to stifle individuality, facilitate control, and by virtue of its newness help fight disease. It consisted of a woollen or serge jacket, a serge petticoat, two linen shifts, two coloured handkerchiefs, two pairs of worsted stockings, one pair of shoes and a linen cap.¹⁰⁴ Personal clothing and goods were packed into the women's boxes, trunks, bags or baskets, and stowed in the hold once each item had been carefully recorded.¹⁰⁵ For some women on the *Royal Admiral* this task was unnecessary as they arrived with only the clothes they wore, having been warned at the prison that anything else would be taken from them and destroyed. They therefore lacked many essentials for the voyage.¹⁰⁶

The articles which women brought with them provide important insights into their cultural and social backgrounds. Boxes, bags and baskets contained items such as aprons, towels, caps, bed gowns, bed linen, sewing materials, needles, books, and baby clothes. One woman brought fourteen books, another eleven caps. The inventories listed items such as bolts of muslin, unmade dresses, valuable dresses, and twenty six yards of cotton. Elizabeth Taylor brought simply a bag of wearing apparel.¹⁰⁷ As Marian Aveling pointed out, young working class women in Britain expected to form a long term relationship with a man from a background much like her own and bear his children.¹⁰⁸ The domestic items which female convicts brought with them show that those expectations remained constant with transportation. Young women brought baby clothes for those yet to be conceived babies, and work baskets to repair their future

¹⁰¹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Ellen Turner (79T) per *Mary* (1831), image 190.

¹⁰² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

¹⁰³ Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*, p. 215.

¹⁰⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/48 Reel 3203, Journal of the *Margaret* (1843) Surgeon-Superintendent John Arnold Mould.

¹⁰⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹⁰⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/65 Reel 3209, Journal of the *Royal Admiral* (1842).

¹⁰⁷ ML TP 21 CY1273, List of prisoners' baggage on the *Sovereign*.

¹⁰⁸ Marian Aveling [now Quartly], 'Bending the Bars: Convict Women and the State', in Kay Saunders and Ray Evans (eds.), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation* (Marrickville [New South Wales], 1992), p. 151.

family's linen. At the end of one list of items the surgeon-superintendent wrote, 'There are besides many little articles too numerous and insignificant to be noted here.'¹⁰⁹ Glib words from an over worked public servant, but those insignificant items were all that remained of the women's past.

Ann Solomon's possessions were atypical. She brought six pieces of luggage which contained wearing apparel such as bonnets, pelisses, a silk dress and muff, fur tippets, children's clothes, two feather beds, a fender and fire irons, china and glass.¹¹⁰ Ann was not identified as a prostitute but according to Levi and Bergman she and her husband Ikey operated a very successful prostitution racket in Angel Court off the Strand prior to their arrest and transportation.¹¹¹

Throughout the preparatory process while the ship lay at anchor, women received visitors on board.¹¹² Those who embarked near their homes or had families who could undertake the journey were fare welled on board. The convict transport became the focus of government officials, grieving kin, curious onlookers and hawkers. Mr Capper, whose signature determined the fate of prisoners bound for the colonies, was a frequent visitor.¹¹³ As the Superintendent of Prison Hulks he had the power to remove a woman if he thought her unfit to travel. Elizabeth Fry and her visitors from the Ladies Committee at Newgate distributed checked aprons, clothing, Bibles, small sums of money, and haberdashery items.¹¹⁴ County magistrates, who had convicted the women, and governors of the prisons which had held them in readiness, also arrived with gifts of money and useful items.¹¹⁵

Prisoners were permitted to take money to the colonies so a process was duly followed to guarantee its safe keeping. The surgeon-superintendent noted the amount and held it

¹⁰⁹ ML TP 21 CY1273, List of prisoners' baggage on the *Sir Charles Forbes*.

¹¹⁰ ML TP 21 CY1273, List of packages belonging to female convicts on the *Mermaid*. Ann Solomon was not identified as a prostitute so is not statistically part of this study.

¹¹¹ John S Levi and George F J Bergman, *Australian Genesis: Jewish Convicts and Settlers 1788-1850* (Adelaide, 1974), pp. 124-125.

¹¹² TAHO NS816/1, Harvey, *Reminiscences of a voyage to Hobart Town*, p. 4.

¹¹³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/65 Reel 3209, Journal of the *Royal Admiral* (1842); Reid, *Two Voyages*, pp. 123-124.

¹¹⁴ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 117.

¹¹⁵ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 131: Mrs Pryor, Lord Lilford and the Reverend Mr Hornby a magistrate from Lancashire, came on board to inquire into some alleged abuses which were said to have occurred in the gaol at Lancaster prior to the removal of the female convicts from that place. See also PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

securely until it could be banked in Van Diemen's Land.¹¹⁶ It may have been the women's own savings, parting gifts from family, friends or officials, income derived from prostitution or from the sale of personal items. Prisoners who were selected as school teachers received remuneration for their employment on the transports. Monetary gifts came from the most unlikely sources. When the Governor of Newgate boarded the *Morley* and presented each woman who had been imprisoned there with half a crown, Thomas Reid disapprovingly wondered at the source of the money, and the motivations for such a donation.¹¹⁷

But the most unusual gift came from the Bank of England. Its solicitor was commissioned to present five pounds to every woman who had been convicted of uttering forged notes, or of having them in her possession.¹¹⁸ This strange bequest was only given to females 'to alleviate in some degree the distresses and want brought upon them by their prosecution.'¹¹⁹ A devout Christian, Reid questioned the political and moral propriety of the gesture. Not all of the five pound notes made their way to the safe keeping of the surgeon-superintendent, since many women had anticipated the gesture and had 'made purchase of various useful articles on the faith of it being paid to them.'¹²⁰

After weighing anchor the progress of a ship was often delayed before reaching the open sea. A ship leaving Woolwich might stop to receive women at the Downs and free passengers often delayed boarding until the last possible port. When the *Morley* called at Gravesend, a bum-boat drew alongside with an old man who offered beer, milk and other articles for sale. Drunken fights broke out in the prison that night, and it was

¹¹⁶ ML TP23 CY 1275, List of women who deposited money (*Borneo*); *Historical Records of Australia Series 111. Despatches and Papers Relating to the Settlement of the States*, vol. 6, Frederick Watson (ed.) (Sydney, 1923), pp. 157-159, Arthur to Under Secretary Hay, 11 September 1827, Instructions for the provision of prisoners' possessions: Prisoners were expected to give all money and valuable property to the surgeon-superintendent who would then pass it to the Commissariat Officer on arrival. Prisoners were permitted to bring one or two boxes (usually of wearing apparel).

¹¹⁷ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 126.

¹¹⁸ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 124. Reid claimed that forty one women were recipients of that largesse which seems like a large number of forgers on one female convict ship.

¹¹⁹ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 130.

¹²⁰ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 130.

discovered that the women had collected between thirty and forty shillings to purchase spirits.¹²¹

An important task for the surgeon-superintendent was the distribution of food rations to ensure that each woman received her share, properly cooked and served at the correct time. The frequent mention in the journals suggested that not only was it important and time consuming, but that the surgeon-superintendent was anxious to demonstrate his compliance with Admiralty instructions.¹²² Both the allocation of rations and rules for general conduct were clearly outlined when the surgeon-superintendent addressed the new arrivals. Each cask of provisions was opened on deck in the presence of the surgeon-superintendent at which time he noted its condition, mark, number and contents. Beef and pork provisions were transferred into harness casks which were padlocked and the keys entrusted to the ship's mate.¹²³

Surgeons-superintendent were scathing in their criticism of gaol rations, yet forthright in their praise of the ship's diet and the ensuing benefits to the prisoners' health. Eight women on the *William Bryan* contracted cholera, but neither the crew nor free passengers succumbed. Surgeon-Superintendent Robertson attributed the prisoners' susceptibility to the adjustment from a prison diet to the 'very full [one] they receive immediately on coming on Board.'¹²⁴ On the *Nautilus* Stewart also made reference to the 'comparatively full & solid ration of a ship'.¹²⁵ Mr Stewart believed that because the Scottish women had travelled to the ship by boat, sea sickness had withered their appetites. The English women were equally disinterested in their food which he attributed to their detention in the Penitentiary in London where sedentary habits and a lack of cleanliness must have palled their capacity for food.¹²⁶

This apparent decrease in appetite among female prisoners was fortuitous, as a decrease in rations was a recurring tactic in the management of the evolving prison system.

¹²¹ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 132.

¹²² *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 346, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on Board Convict Ships.

¹²³ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 346, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on Board Convict Ships.

¹²⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/74 Reel 3212, Journal of the *William Bryan* (1833) Surgeon-Superintendent Thomas Robertson.

¹²⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹²⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

Michael Ignatieff identified a steady reduction of prison dietary scales during the first half of the nineteenth century as authorities sought a balance between punishment and luxury.¹²⁷ The opinion of most medical officers would suggest that on transports to Van Diemen's Land the balance was weighted towards luxury. Stewart examined the subject and argued that prisoners awaiting transportation had different dietary requirements to those facing incarceration at home. He suggested that,

prisoners who have had sentences of banishment pronounced, should be rendered more full & solid than the common jail diet, as soon as their sentence has been passed. A good prison diet is objected to as affording a bonus upon crime by its superiority over that which could be had at home. But however applicable this may be to those minor offences for which temporary incarceration at home is directed, it cannot apply to those whose sentence involves a removal to a foreign land ... As things are now managed, [with] the comparatively full diet of a prison ship ... prisoners are thereby understandably rendered less equal to their lengthened voyage ... than they might have if earlier prepared for it by diet in their prisons after sentence had been passed.¹²⁸

One essential provision was the daily ration of lemon or lime juice, one ounce of which was mixed with one ounce of sugar and water to make a 'sherbet' as an anti-scorbutic. It was within the surgeon-superintendent's power to prevent scurvy and that means was clearly spelt out in his instructions:

He is to cause lemon-juice and sugar to be issued to the convicts in the proportion of an ounce of each to a man daily, which should be mixed occasionally with the wine allowed to them, or used unmixed as sherbet ...¹²⁹

Peter Leonard administered it immediately after dinner when the prisoners were mustered 'that it might not be wasted or misapplied but that each might experience the

¹²⁷ Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (New York, 1978), pp. 175-177, 93-94.

¹²⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838) .

¹²⁹ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 346, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on Board Convict Ships.

full benefits in the prevention of scurvy.’¹³⁰ But James Barr had little faith in the efficacy of the treatment and noted that:

I put into the Cape where having got ten days fresh provisions I discontinued the issue of lemon juice. Indeed were I to take out convicts again I should propose to run the voyage without issuing a single ounce, satisfied that with the excellent quality of the provisions, and keeping the Prisoners clean and upon the deck from morning till night when the weather permitted not a single case of scurvy would occur.¹³¹

Samuel Sinclair also preferred an alternative preventative:

Having procured some essence of spruce before I left England, a small pot of which with eight pounds of sugar mixed in ten gallons of water and set to ferment for a few days formed an excellent anti scorbutic drink and was much relished by these patients to each of whom I administered one pint the first thing in the morning and last thing at night. The chill being taken off by heating a part of it and mixing with the remainder.¹³²

He also employed spruce essence as a restorative for debility of the stomach. Spruce was a popular curative, and in 1826 Hobart Town boasted a Spruce and Ginger Beer Warehouse whose owner was registered as a druggist.¹³³

James Patton was also unconvinced of the efficacy of anti-scorbutics. He claimed that the absence of scurvy on the *Persian* was due to the careful cooking of provisions, cleaning and drying of the prison, and healthful exercise. He conceded that the daily allowance of wine, lemon juice and sugar may have contributed but highlighted the ‘fondness of women to make use of their oatmeal as Gruel and to use a less quantity of salted animal food than Males generally do.’ His evidence was the higher incidence of scurvy on male convict ships.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹³¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1841) Surgeon Superintendent James Barr.

¹³² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of *Mary* (1831).

¹³³ Allport Library and Museum of Fine Art, *The Tasmanian Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1826, being the second after leapyer, calculated for the Meridian of Hobart Town Longitude 147° 25' – Latitude 43° 5' S to which are added Lists of the Civil and Military Establishments, and Public Institutions, in the Dependency; with other Information not published in any of the previous Almanacks* (Hobart Town, 1826 compiled and printed by Andrew Bent), p. 71.

¹³⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

Allen McLaren was less enamoured of oatmeal than his colleague and suggested that

There is plenty, indeed too much oatmeal now allowed but when old, as it generally is when shipped, it is so full of insects and so acrid that I could hardly get the English children to eat it and when they did it generally disordered the bowels and stomach ... so decrease it as well as pease which is more than they need.
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An English resistance to oatmeal was one of many cultural aversions to particular foodstuffs noted by surgeons-superintendent. Historian John Williams claimed that the Irish refused pea soup, cocoa, tea, puddings and lime juice.¹³⁶

One pint of wine was distributed either twice weekly, every second day, or daily.¹³⁷ On the *Atwick* a glass of wine was issued at noon prior to dinner but 'to prevent a probability of drunkenness by disposing of or giving away the wine, each individual was compelled to drink it in passing muster.'¹³⁸ This allocation was deplored by Quakers Backhouse and Walker who saw the practice as 'productive of great evil, and we would submit that it ought only to be administered as medicine.'¹³⁹ They felt that the prisoners' 'unhappy propensity' for drinking alcohol was fostered by that daily allowance.¹⁴⁰ On some female transports each mess was also issued with a tin kettle so women could make tea.¹⁴¹ Extra rations of an ounce of tea and six ounces of sugar were granted daily as a reward to the cleanest and most orderly mess.¹⁴² This indulgence was not offered on male ships.¹⁴³

¹³⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/35 Reel 3198, Journal of the *Hydery* (1832) Surgeon-Superintendent Allen McLaren.

¹³⁶ John Williams, 'Irish Female Convicts and Tasmania', *Labour History* vol. 44 (May, 1983), p.11.

¹³⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827); Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*, pp. 216-217.

¹³⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹³⁹ James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies* (New York, 1967 [London, 1843) Appendix F. 'Report upon the State of the Prisoners in Van Diemen's Land, with Remarks upon the Penal Discipline, and Observations on the General State of the Colony in 1834', p. lvi.

¹⁴⁰ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*, p. lviii.

¹⁴¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹⁴² *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 346, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on Board Convict Ships.

¹⁴³ R V Jackson, 'Sickness and Health', p. 84.

Hospital patients and nursing mothers were given special diets which included preserved meats and vegetables from canners such as Donkin and Hall of London.¹⁴⁴ Preserved rations were preferable to salted provisions which were known to exacerbate certain conditions such as gonorrhoea. They were also considered unsuitable for children. Allan McLaren suggested that,

the quality of the provisions at present allowed the Infant in arms is the same as that which is allowed the mother with the exception of Tea – as it cannot be supposed that a child under a year old can digest salt beef and pork I beg leave to suggest that a quantity of Rice be put on board to be substituted for the Salt provision at the discretion of the Surgeon Superintendent ... this alteration in diet might also be extended to such of the Female prisoners as are delicate.¹⁴⁵

The surgeon-superintendent was also responsible for maintaining a high standard of discipline during the voyage. The extension of his power took place at a time when the field of medicine was struggling for authority within contemporary debates concerning penal and welfare institutions. Kim Humphery examined the role of the surgeon-superintendent within this wider political and cultural debate on penal reform.¹⁴⁶ The tendency has been to locate the surgeon-superintendent within a narrative of improved health, safety and regulation whereas Humphery argues that these appointments created 'medicalised supervision of the prison population rather than the humanitarian eclipse of severity and repression.'¹⁴⁷ The increase in his authority was part of a general shift in penal administration and disciplinary techniques, away from *ad hoc* supervision to a uniform and controlled system of reformatory discipline.¹⁴⁸ Humphery maintains that women were subjected to less medicalised supervision than men, but that the surgeon's influence nonetheless intruded into every aspect of their shipboard life.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', p. 32. Donkin and Hall were contracted by the Admiralty to supply preserved foods.

¹⁴⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/35 Reel 3198, Journal of the *Hydery* (1832). For a discussion on the disadvantages of salted provisions see also PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841).

¹⁴⁶ Humphery, 'A New Era of Existence', p. 60.

¹⁴⁷ Humphery, 'A New Era of Existence', p. 60.

¹⁴⁸ Humphery, 'A New Era of Existence', p. 65.

¹⁴⁹ Humphery, 'A New Era of Existence', p. 66.

According to Brand and Staniforth, most offences on board female transports were breaches of discipline such as insolence and refusal to obey orders, although petty theft was also common.¹⁵⁰ When David Thomson replaced the ailing George Rowe as surgeon-superintendent on the *New Grove*, he found that prisoners had been on board for five weeks, during which time discipline had become lax.¹⁵¹ It must have completely broken down on the *Navarino* where women were punished for striking officers, using obscene language, and fighting.¹⁵² The same could be said on the *Persian* when James Patton faced an attempted rebellion of female prisoners and crew. Many of the women had planned to resist going below, and the sailors had determined to support them in their defiance.¹⁵³ Irrespective of that incident Patton held very low expectations of the women in his care and believed that,

a number of unfortunate and ill disposed women are assembled together during a long and tedious voyage and in different climates, over whom the most moral example of others has little or no effect and who are at all times prone to follow the immoral habits of their former Life.¹⁵⁴

Yet he congratulated himself on preventing illicit unions between the women and the crew:

My unwearied application and care was constantly directed to the 24 Article of my instructions respecting the Prevention of prostitution between the prisoners and ship's crew and I feel proud to say that every officer in the ship showed the most moral and praise worthy example in this respect ... I am firmly of opinion that an opportunity was not given for even an occasional Disgrace of the kind, with any of the seamen.¹⁵⁵

Joy Damousi saw the private sphere on a female convict ship as a site of chaos and disorder where sexual promiscuity could potentially unsettle the regime of order and control.¹⁵⁶ In the confined, isolated space of a ship, sexual anxiety was accentuated. Thus mutiny and disorder held differing meanings on female transports where they were

¹⁵⁰ Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', pp. 34-35.

¹⁵¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3206, Journal of the *New Grove* (1835).

¹⁵² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841).

¹⁵³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

¹⁵⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

¹⁵⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

¹⁵⁶ Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, p. 12.

defined in sexual terms.¹⁵⁷ Instructions to surgeons-superintendent were explicit in that prostitution between the crew and female prisoners was to be prevented at all costs and any breach of these rules was to be severely punished.

Punishment for women could take the form of isolation from others, banishment from the deck, loss of wine ration, placement in the 'coal hole', a diet of bread and water, or ironing. Patton gave considerable thought to methods of punishment for his refractory women and suggested that,

Another mode of punishment which I think ought to be in the Surgeon's power is confinement by handcuffing about half a dozen should be on each ship.¹⁵⁸

He also proved to be a strong advocate for solitary confinement but because of the dampness within the hold,

a small dark cell with air holes and a bed place should be filled up under the Hospital or any other part of the ship ... where refractory females may be confined for 1, 2 or 3 days upon bread and water ... an instrument of terror in the Surgeon's hands ... women fear solitary confinement more than any other punishment.¹⁵⁹

The 'black box' was a means of solitary confinement which was considered to be a most effective means of disciplining unruly women.¹⁶⁰ It was positioned on the deck and its success was such that the surgeon-superintendent of the *Navarino* suggested that one was insufficient.¹⁶¹ When solitary cells were added in the late 1840s it became obsolete.¹⁶²

Mary Lang, a prostitute who was described by Surgeon-Superintendent Gilchrist as stout and plethoric, was credited with being one of the most violent and ungovernable women on the *Mermaid*.¹⁶³ Her excessively bad conduct, violent language and threatening gestures compelled Gilchrist to make an example of her. Milder measures

¹⁵⁷ Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, p. 16.

¹⁵⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

¹⁵⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

¹⁶⁰ Humphery, 'A New Era of Existence', p. 68.

¹⁶¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841).

¹⁶² Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', p. 35.

¹⁶³ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Lang (67L) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 314.

having failed, he ordered the crew to place her under hatches for the night. Mary slipped her restraint, and fell down a hatchway. She was merely stunned, but nevertheless hospitalised, given a purgative and relieved of a quantity of blood by the vigilant doctor.¹⁶⁴

Removal from the deck was usually a last resort because, as with many of his colleagues, Peter Fisher preferred prisoners to remain 'always on deck during day ... excepting when I sent them below for punishment.'¹⁶⁵ Another method of punishment which demonstrated the reach of the surgeon-superintendent's power was to enter the name of a prisoner onto a black list which was passed to the governor on arrival. When the *Sovereign* docked in Hobart Town, Robert Malcolm presented the names of five women who were 'remarkable for Bad behaviour'.¹⁶⁶ The judgement of the surgeon-superintendent could significantly influence a woman's future prospects and the Assignment Board took his assessment into account when allocating servants. The warning was clear, 'whether the conduct of an individual be good or bad, it is imperiously my duty to record it as such.'¹⁶⁷ Head shaving was practised on some female convict ships but in the period covered by this research the only head shaving recorded in the journals was performed as part of a medical procedure in preparation for vesiculation.¹⁶⁸

However recourse to punishment was the exception in what was generally a day of routine chores. Celebrated cases of punishment and abuse have too often been used in conjunction with stories of immorality and fatalities to create a world which bore little resemblance to the reality of shipboard life for most women. David Thomson found that during the voyage the moral conduct of the prisoners was with few exceptions good, and it was rarely necessary to resort to punishment.¹⁶⁹ A similar view was expressed on the *Royal Admiral* where,

¹⁶⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/53 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mermaid* (1828) Surgeon-Superintendent James Gilchrist.

¹⁶⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/46 Reel 3202, Journal of the *Majestic* (1839).

¹⁶⁶ ML TP 21 CY 1273, Ship manifest for the *Sovereign*.

¹⁶⁷ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 112.

¹⁶⁸ See chapter 5.

¹⁶⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/23 Reel 3194, Journal of the *Eliza* (1830) Surgeon-Superintendent David Thomson.

The Convicts ... with few exceptions will behave, cleanly, industriously and willingly disposed to improve themselves and some of the most refractory and turbulent characters Newgate produced ... after some little trouble, became very orderly, well disposed, and industrious girls and preserved that character to the end of the voyage.¹⁷⁰

Even an attempted mutiny by the crew had failed to disrupt the women's behaviour which Mr Roberts described as exceedingly praiseworthy and orderly.¹⁷¹ Charles Cameron of the *Midas* also noted that the prisoners 'go about every thing which I wish them to do, in the most willing manner; even they are respectfully forward in offering their services.'¹⁷² And while Robert Malcolm listed five errant women on the *Sovereign*, he also recommended three females who were 'remarkable for good behaviour.'¹⁷³

Michael Ignatieff saw 'hygienic rituals' as reformatory, and they were diligently promoted on transports.¹⁷⁴ A strict attention to hygiene was considered to be essential to the health and wellbeing of the female prisoners and as with discipline, the surgeon-superintendent established a standard which was maintained within a clearly defined routine. Discipline and hygiene were inextricably linked not only through a common caretaker, but because his language affirmed them as inseparable. Kim Humphery considered that an obsessive emphasis on hygiene, rational planning and order, accompanied the professionalism of convict transportation.¹⁷⁵ This need for cleanliness was expressed in the rules and regulations on board ship, and constantly reiterated by the surgeon-superintendent.¹⁷⁶ Theories about dirt and cleanliness could be expanded to embrace ideas about social order and disorder.¹⁷⁷ The juxtaposition between 'filth' both metaphorically and literally, and the need for ships to be clean, ordered and disciplined, was a continuing theme within the journals. The association of bodily filth and disease with disorder and disintegration is manifest in the link between deviance and pollution

¹⁷⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/65 Reel 3209, Journal of the *Royal Admiral* (1842).

¹⁷¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/65 Reel 3209, Journal of the *Royal Admiral* (1842).

¹⁷² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/53 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Midas* (1825).

¹⁷³ ML TP 21 CY 1273, List for the *Sovereign*.

¹⁷⁴ Ignatieff, *Just Measure of Pain*, p. 101.

¹⁷⁵ Humphery, 'A New Era of Existence', p. 65.

¹⁷⁶ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 347, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on Board Convict Ships. See journals for the *Atwick*, *Majestic*, *Nautilus*, and *Mexborough*.

¹⁷⁷ Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, p. 28.

which featured in literature surrounding prostitution in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

On female transports, bathing took place once a week either below or on deck in favourable weather. A screen shielded the bathing tub on board the *Atwick* where women mounted the quarter deck to perform their ablutions.¹⁷⁸ As the *Nautilus* passed through the tropics bathing took place every sixth day between six and nine in the morning.¹⁷⁹ Mr Clarke insisted that women bathed weekly on the *Navarino* to prevent such pests as 'itch' (scabies), or lice when not only their bodies, but their government-issue clothing was subjected to close scrutiny. Three women on the *Atwick* were noted as wearing wigs, and clerks describing prisoners on the *Gilbert Henderson* made similar observations.¹⁸⁰ Presumably these items were also carefully cleaned.

A large volume of clothing meant that laundry was often done in two lots each week. Generally the women changed their underclothes weekly and on the *Nautilus* it took place on Sunday.¹⁸¹ On the *Atwick* two women from the mess laundered the underclothes twice a week with warm fresh water and soap. The same routine applied on the *Navarino* where Tuesday and Wednesday were the appointed days, whilst Wednesday and Saturday were preferred laundry days on the *Lady of the Lake*. Many surgeons-superintendent emphasised the use of 'fresh' water for this chore. It was heated in coppers on the deck and once washed the clothes were then hung on lines to dry. The matrons of each mess were held responsible for any washing subsequently done in the prison or hospital, and wet linen or clothing was prohibited below deck as part of the war against dampness and moisture.¹⁸² To complete the process, tables were provided for ironing.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹⁷⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹⁸⁰ TAHO CON19/1/12, Description Lists of Female Convicts 1828-1853 (*Atwick* and *Gilbert Henderson*).

¹⁸¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹⁸² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

¹⁸³ Humphery, 'A New Era of Existence', p. 65.

Daily routine

Women on the *New Grove* began their day when the prison door was unlocked. Names were called and each prisoner was admitted to the deck bringing her bedding in a neat bundle. This she took to the gangway where it was stowed within the netting.¹⁸⁴ That practice was discontinued on the *Nautilus* where the position of the galley meant that the bedding was exposed to smoke and fumes.¹⁸⁵ The *Atwick's* prison was opened at sunrise and bedding stowed daily in the nettings, after which each prisoner was mustered to wash herself. Women then remained on deck and not surprisingly many entries in the description lists remark on their freckled arms and faces. In hot weather awnings were erected to provide shade.¹⁸⁶ John Stewart believed that 'Keeping all on deck from 7 am to a few minutes before sunset, except when rain or bad weather prevented it, was of great benefit to the women's health.'¹⁸⁷ But fear of dampness was constant.¹⁸⁸ The surgeon-superintendent on the *Atwick* was ever vigilant to muster the women below in the event of a shower, or if sea sprays swept across the deck. To Mr Leonard it was imperative that bodies and clothing should remain thoroughly dry.¹⁸⁹

Once the prison was vacated, the daily chore of cleaning commenced. Boards from the bottom tier of the bunks were scrubbed as were the tables and seats.¹⁹⁰ Samuel Mackey attributed the continued health of women on the *Waverley* to the careful attention which he gave to the cleaning of the ship.¹⁹¹ A high standard of cleanliness and hygiene was guaranteed on the *Nautilus* since 'the decision of which was the cleanest mess & the mere hinting that any mess was dirty was punishment enough with all the banterings & taunts of the messes around the offenders.'¹⁹² Cleaners on the *Atwick* scrubbed the prison floor with holystones and sand, since water was forbidden for fear of

¹⁸⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3206, Journal of the *New Grove* (1835).

¹⁸⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹⁸⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹⁸⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹⁸⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹⁸⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹⁹⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/53 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mexborough* (1841) Surgeon-Superintendent John S Hampton.

¹⁹¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/73 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Waverley* (1842) Surgeon-Superintendent Samuel Mackey.

¹⁹² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

dampness.¹⁹³ Opinions differed as to the superiority of water or dry stone for cleaning the decks. Washing was advocated on the *New Grove* and justified on the *Nautilus* because 'although they were thus regularly washed they were afterwards rubbed as dry that the heel of my boot could seldom show a trace of their having undergone that operation when I went round at 10 to see all cleared up.'¹⁹⁴ A similar allowance was made by the surgeon-superintendent on the *Lady of the Lake* although he preferred dry holystoning on male convict ships. The use of water was only permitted when the weather was particularly fine. Surgeon-Superintendent Evans accepted the impossibility of inducing women to be satisfied with holystoning, 'being so contrary to their usual mode of cleaning in situations to which they have been accustomed'.¹⁹⁵ The lower deck of the *Lady of the Lake* was thus scraped and scrubbed with cloths but using as little water as possible. This was performed under the superintendence of women who were appointed to the task, and then closely inspected by Mr. Evans.¹⁹⁶ Convict supervisors Margaret Stewart Mason and Mary Ann Guy ensured that it was cleaned every morning and swept after every meal.¹⁹⁷

On the *Majestic* the surgeon-superintendent explained why he had dispensed with the official regulations for the cleaning of the prison:

I had two women to superintend the cleaning of the deck below, one on each side with four or five women under her. There was scarcely a day, that they were not sprinkled, scrubbed or scraped – by that plan with which I commenced, I ended and am pretty well convinced I had much less trouble, and the duty at the same time performed with more efficiency, than by the adoption of the admiralty Instructions. I never had occasion to use any of the Chloride of Lime nor any of the Stoves.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838). Holystones were pieces of soft sandstone which were used for scouring the decks. They were allegedly called 'Bibles' because they were employed when kneeling.

¹⁹⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹⁹⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

¹⁹⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

¹⁹⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829). Only Mary Ann Guy was identified as a prostitute.

¹⁹⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/46 Reel 3202, Journal of the *Majestic* (1839).

As part of the cleaning regime on the *Mary*, the hospital and prison were fumigated with a vapour of hot tar and vinegar.¹⁹⁹ Water closets were given careful attention on the *Atwick* and those in the prison and on deck had chloride of lime poured in and around them three times a week.²⁰⁰ The convict overseers on the *Lady of the Lake* ensured that the water closet cisterns were filled at least twice a day.²⁰¹

Preparation of meals was another major task which broke the monotony of the women's day and required the attention of the surgeon-superintendent. Convict overseers selected delegates from each mess by rotation to superintend the issuing of provisions. This strategy was designed to minimise the likelihood of complaints arising at the conclusion of the voyage.²⁰² It was while undertaking this chore that Elizabeth Taylor received the fracture which incapacitated her for the remainder of the voyage. The coveted positions of cook and cook's mate were also selected from among the prisoners, and offered a means of adding to those small savings which could soften their colonial experience. They were paid in the drippings from the fat, which according to Surgeon-Superintendent Evans they then sold to the colonial soap boilers.²⁰³ Cooks were admitted on deck at six o'clock each morning, the delegates at seven, and the prison doors opened for the remainder to come on deck at eight o'clock. Breakfast was between eight and nine on the *Lady of the Lake* before which a portion of each meal was inspected by Mr Evans to ensure that it was properly cooked, and did not compromise the health of the prisoners.²⁰⁴ The *Atwick* women ate dinner at noon, after which Mr Leonard checked the health, personal cleanliness and clothing of his charges.²⁰⁵ As with the regular mustering and roll calls, this process allowed the surgeon-superintendent to become acquainted with the prisoners and detect any changes in their health or appearance.²⁰⁶ On the *Lady of the Lake* dinner was at one o'clock and both ships served tea at four.²⁰⁷

¹⁹⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²⁰⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

²⁰¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

²⁰² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

²⁰³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

²⁰⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

²⁰⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

²⁰⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3206, Journal of the *New Grove* (1835).

²⁰⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829); PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

Journals indicate that the surgeons-superintendent strove to keep the women constantly occupied and busy. Employment took the form of educational or craft activities although Kim Humphery believes that women's education and training was not given the same attention as that on men's convict transports.²⁰⁸ Yet it is evident that classes were offered, and on the *Mary* three schools were conducted daily, for which the school mistresses were duly paid.²⁰⁹ Esther Matthews, who had spent seven months on the town in London, was so successful as a school mistress on the *Harmony* that the surgeon-superintendent recommended she be assigned on arrival to a quiet family with children.²¹⁰ (Figure 4.1 below)

Figure 4.1: Description list for Esther Matthews per *Harmony*

DESCRIPTION. No. 84

Name *Esther Matthews*

Trade *Housemaid*

Height WITHOUT SHOES *5/1 3/4*

Age *26*

Complexion *Ruddy*

Head *Good*

Hair *Brown*

~~Whiskers~~

Visage *long*

Forehead *perpen. high*

Eyebrows *low*

Eyes *hazel*

Nose *M.L. sharp pointed*

Mouth *M.W. thick underlip irreg. shape teeth*

Chin *M.L.*

Remarks *scar back of left hand.*

has been school mistress for 7 years strongly recommended by the Dr for a quiet family where there are children

Source: TAHO CON19/1/13

²⁰⁸ Humphery, 'A New Era in Existence', pp. 66-67.

²⁰⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²¹⁰ TAHO CON40/1/7, Esther Matthews (84M) per *Harmony* (1829), image 44; TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Harmony*). His advice seems to have been heeded for the following year Esther was in the service of Dr. Ross a tutor, newspaper editor and father of thirteen children. But it is doubtful that they were a quiet family: Anonymous, 'Ross, James (1786-1838)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ross-james-2607> (20 April 2012).

The *Atwick* routine demanded that,

During the forenoon and morning such of the convicts as could not read or write were engaged at school under some of the best educated amongst themselves who were appointed as school mistresses. The others were employed at needlework.²¹¹

In later years a free person was sent by the Ladies' Committee at Newgate to tutor the prisoners, and schools were conducted by religious instructors.²¹² Brand and Staniforth share Humphery's scepticism about the value of schooling, attributing the apparent success rate of reading to the rote learning of set passages from the Bible.²¹³ Yet Deborah Oxley believes that onboard schooling must have contributed to the high rate of literacy among convict women.²¹⁴

During the voyage, the individual packages of fabric and haberdashery which the Ladies Committee had distributed at the quayside were transformed into garments and decorative fancywork.²¹⁵ Women who conducted themselves 'properly' were permitted to sell, or otherwise dispose of their finished products.²¹⁶ Some brought unmade dresses to stitch away the time.²¹⁷ Prisoners on the *Mary* had 'their minds kept employed as much as possible through the day by constant work in making each a counterpane for which they had a reward.'²¹⁸ They were also busy repairing and airing their clothing.²¹⁹ Handcrafts such as straw plaiting, knitting and sewing occupied the women on the *Mary*, *Atwick*, and *Navarino*. Records show that nine women who were identified as prostitutes also claimed the trade of straw bonnet maker and three more were straw plaiters. Straw plaiting was a popular pastime on the *Mary*, and Mary Hanby, a prostitute from the Isle of Man, was also a straw plaiter and straw bonnet maker, so she may have shared those skills with her shipmates. But after being assigned to Mr Hopkins in Van Diemen's Land this straw bonnet maker seems to have plaited herself

²¹¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

²¹² Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', p. 34, citing Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 127.

²¹³ Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', p. 34.

²¹⁴ Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 115.

²¹⁵ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 182. Reid lamented that within a short time, the materials were 'worked up' and such employment was no longer available to occupy the women.

²¹⁶ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 353, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on Board Convict Ships.

²¹⁷ Reid, *Two Voyages*, p. 29.

²¹⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²¹⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

into oblivion. There is no evidence that she ever took up her assignment. Her CON40 record is blank and at each muster she was registered as an absconder.²²⁰ The only other mention of Mary was the *Hobart Town Courier* of 1838 which invited her to claim her Certificate of Freedom.²²¹ Even that did not coax her out of hiding for the 1841 muster still classified her as an absconder.

Surgeon-Superintendent Lardner found that,

the incalculable good arising from the constant employment of female prisoners ... was vastly conducive to discipline and orderly conduct. It also contributed much to the health of the prisoners, its importance on this head alone, is so great that ... I would propose that in future all vessels conveying female Prisoners should be provided with ample employment in the shape of shirt making etc ... In this ship upwards of 1100 articles were made during the voyage, one female of ordinary capacity making a shirt a day – Education was not neglected, those employed at needle work in the morning, read in the afternoon and vice versa.²²²

The most significant evidence for the industry of female convicts on the voyage to Van Diemen's Land survives in the form of the *Rajah* quilt.²²³ During the passage from Woolwich to Hobart Town in 1841, women used fabric and thread donated by the Ladies' Committee, to create a patchwork quilt which according to its inscription was dedicated 'TO THE LADIES of the convict ship committee'. While the names of the women who worked on the quilt will never be known, many on board claimed the skills of needlework, dressmaking and tailoring. Twenty nine women were qualified in such skills, eleven of whom were also former prostitutes.²²⁴

When surgeons-superintendent described the hygiene regimes which they had instigated during the voyage, it was frequently accompanied by assurances that religious

²²⁰TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Hanby (179H) per *Mary* (1831), image 94; Female Convict Musters, 1832, 1833, 1835, 1841.

²²¹*Hobart Town Courier*, 9 February 1838. 'Certificate of Freedom can be obtained at Muster Master office or a Police Magistrate in the Interior'.

²²²PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/75 Reel 3213, Journal of the *Woodbridge* (1843).

²²³<http://nga.gov.au/RajahQuilt/> (4 April 2012).

²²⁴For the story of the *Rajah* Quilt see Trudy Cowley and Dianne Snowden, *Patchwork Prisoners: the Rajah Quilt and the women who made it* (Hobart, 2013). The *Rajah* Quilt is today held by the National Gallery of Australia.

instruction had not been neglected.²²⁵ Religious and moral training was deemed to be essential, and women risked punishment if they disturbed others who were occupied in devotional pursuits.²²⁶ Everyone attended divine service when the surgeon-superintendent read the sermon and led the congregation in prayers.²²⁷

Released from the paternalistic gaze of the surgeon-superintendent, women found their own forms of relaxation and entertainment. The many children who sailed with their convict mothers meant that children's games and child minding duties were a constant occupation for women. Convict women were at childbearing and child rearing age so children and families were an inevitable part of shipboard life for female convicts, free women passengers, soldier's wives and some prostitutes.

Ann Screech brought her infant daughter Mary Ann with her on the *Rajah* but left three children at home.²²⁸ The report from Plymouth Gaol described her as a prostitute who was addicted to pilfering and drinking. Her first colonial offence was recorded a year after her arrival by which time Mary Ann would have been weaned and Ann had been assigned. Ann was charged with being absent while attending her child. Eight months later she was found guilty of pawning a fellow servant's clothes. She may have wanted the money to give Mary Ann a decent burial, or purchase spirits to soften the pain. The thirteen month old was buried on the day her mother pawned the clothes.²²⁹ She had died in the Nursery at the Female Factory.

With Mary Ann Screech on the *Rajah* was an infant belonging to Martha Williams who had left two other children at home. Martha had also been sentenced to fourteen years transportation and was pregnant with her fourth child. She was a thirty two year old widow from County Cork who had spent the past few years on the town.²³⁰

²²⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²²⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²²⁷ Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', p. 34.

²²⁸ TAHO CON40/1/10, Ann Screech (447S) per *Rajah* (1841), image 54.

²²⁹ RGD34/1/2, Register-General's Department, Register of Burials in Tasmania (929), 28 December 1842, Hobart.

²³⁰ TAHO CON40/1/10, Martha Williams (416W) per *Rajah* (1841), image 196; ML TP 22 CY 1274, Appropriation list for the *Rajah*; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/64 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1841).

Bridget Conway was transported for receiving the sum of seventy pounds and arrived on the *Waverley* in 1842 with her four young children.²³¹ Her adult daughters Bridget and Mary had secured their own passage. After spending twelve months on the town they were jointly convicted of stealing the aforementioned seventy pounds.²³² Mr. Conway was shortly to join them in Van Diemen's Land as he sailed on the male transport *Navarino*.²³³

Caroline Ward brought her baby daughter Jane with her on the *Emma Eugenia* and Jane was duly vaccinated by Jonathan Kidd while another of Caroline's children remained at home.²³⁴ She declared that the father of her children was Brian Mc Vain, and her body confirmed that relationship because on her right arm was tattooed B M V, I B, C W.²³⁵

Both male and female convicts were tattooed on their bodies during the voyage. Watching their shipmates record their hopes, memories and details of loved ones would have filled many an empty hour.²³⁶ Gambling was a popular pastime in the nineteenth century and surgeons' journals reveal that the addiction was not left on the docks at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Woolwich or Dublin. Surgeon-Superintendent Stewart on the *Nautilus* noted that not only did Jane Smith smoke and swear but she was also a great gambler.²³⁷

Physical exercise was considered beneficial to the women's health, and Mr Ellis on the *Westmoreland* reported the increased activity and improved looks of the prisoners once the weather became more moderate.²³⁸ Women on the *Atwick* underwent 'bodily

²³¹ TAHO CON15/1/2, Indents of female convicts 1831-1853 (*Waverley*).

²³² TAHO CON40/1/2, Mary Conway (543C) per *Waverley* (1842), image 237; TAHO CON40/1/2, Bridget Conway Jr. (542C) per *Waverley* (1842), image 236.

²³³ TAHO CON40/1/2, Bridget Conway Snr (544C) per *Waverley* (1843), image 237.

²³⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/25 Reel 3195, Journal of the *Emma Eugenia* (1842) Surgeon -Superintendent Jonathan Kidd.

²³⁵ TAHO CON40/1/10, Caroline Ward (469W [470 on appropriation list]) per *Emma Eugenia* (1842), image 213; TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Emma Eugenia*).

²³⁶ For discussion on convict tattooing see: David Kent, 'Decorative Bodies: The Significance of Convicts' Tattoos', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 21, no. 53 (1997); Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and Ian Duffield, 'Skin Deep Devotions: Religious Tattoos and Convict Transportation to Australia', in Jane Caplan (ed.), *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History* (London, 2000); Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and James Bradley, 'Convict Tattoos: Tales of freedom and coercion', in Michele Field and Timothy Millett (eds.), *Convict Love Tokens, the Leaden Hearts the Convicts Left Behind* (Kent Town, 1998).

²³⁷ TAHO CON40/1/10, Jane Smith (355S) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 23.

²³⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/74 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Westmoreland* (1836).

exercise and constant mental employment on the deck' as well as two hours in the evening which were 'devoted to dancing and various innocent amusements for the sake of exercise.'²³⁹ Similarly on the *Mary*,

A strict attention to exercise was also enforced when the weather permitted in the open air, and with a view to promote the circulation dancing with Skip ropes was ordered for an hour every Evening.²⁴⁰

Following the evening meal and exercise, bedding was taken below and before sunset the prisoners were mustered on deck. As each answered to her name she descended into the prison which was then secured for the night.²⁴¹ In concluding the *Nautilus* journal, Surgeon-Superintendent Stewart added that 'The only other point which occurs to me at the moment is that all were in bed by 8; & no talking or noise of any sort was allowed after I made my last round at 8 ½ p.m.'²⁴² Perhaps in Mr Stewart's ideal world that would have been the case, but the truth was probably closer to Mary Haigh's recollection before the Select Committee on Female Convict Discipline. She claimed that after the women were locked into the prison at night they could receive rum through the bars of the prison, gain access to the sailors, or for the less recalcitrant, 'Singing, dancing and telling the Histories of their past lives beguiled the time away – no one was present to check us, in fact after being "locked down" we did just as we pleased.'²⁴³

The smooth execution of this daily routine was dependent on the women themselves. Not only in their tacit agreement to accept the rules and regulations which governed the ship, but in their active participation as supervisors and workers in the cleaning, allocation of rations, cooking, teaching and nursing of the sick. The selection process for supervisors and monitors varied from ship to ship. Sometimes the Ladies' Committee made the choices, and at other times the surgeon-superintendent selected

²³⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

²⁴⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²⁴¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

²⁴² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

²⁴³ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Select Committee Report on Female Convict Discipline 1841', pp. 304–305, evidence of Mary Haigh; TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Haigh (269H) per *Arab* (1836), image 6.

mess monitors, matrons, nurses and hospital attendants. He was instructed to appoint the most fit and trustworthy to attend the sick.²⁴⁴

No systematic record survives of women who were appointed to these positions but information occasionally comes indirectly via the surgeon's journal. This mark of merit was then transferred to the indent by the surgeon-superintendent during the voyage, so that it became part of the information which finally reached the Principal Superintendent of Convicts or the Muster Master in Hobart Town. Less frequently it reached the prisoner's conduct record.²⁴⁵ Another method whereby researchers can identify monitors is through the description lists which were occasionally annotated with the detail. Esther Matthew's success as a school mistress and her glowing recommendation by the surgeon-superintendent survives as part of the entry on her description list.²⁴⁶ When Margaret Thompson was interviewed on arrival in the colony it was recorded that she had previously been a nurse in a fever hospital and she produced two certificates to support her claim. It is likely that she was employed in the ship's hospital yet that was not noted on her records.

These chance comments provide some evidence of the responsibility which women held on board. And the label 'prostitute' did not preclude women from being given those responsible positions. At least twenty eight former prostitutes were appointed to positions of authority on ships.²⁴⁷ In six cases their history of prostitution may not have been known until they made the declaration on arrival in Van Diemen's Land. But twenty one women were known by authorities to be prostitutes when appointed to those positions. The designation occurred on the gaol report for nine women, and on the indent for the remaining twelve, and the surgeon-superintendent had access to both of these documents during the passage.²⁴⁸ Six ships carried prostitutes who were appointed to positions of authority. They were the *Mary Anne* (1822), *Westmoreland* (1836), *Nautilus* (1838), *Rajah* (1841), *Hope* (1842) and the *Woodbridge* (1843).

²⁴⁴ *BPP Transportation*, 2, p. 346, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on Board Convict Ships.

²⁴⁵ This was apparent in the conduct records for women on the *Hindustan* and the *Sir Charles Forbes*.

²⁴⁶ TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Harmony*); See Figure 4.1: Description list for Esther Matthews per *Harmony*.

²⁴⁷ Appendix H: Prostitutes appointed as monitors on ships to Van Diemen's Land.

²⁴⁸ For a more detailed examination of the possible record linkages see Chapter 2.

Surgeon-Superintendent James Donovan explained that the selection of women to undertake positions of responsibility on board the *Rajah* was made from the women held in the General Penitentiary at Millbank and was done prior to embarkation. One morning,

A Steamer came alongside with 24 who had been selected by the Ladies Members of the Society for the reformation of Female prisoners as the best conducted and most suited to fill the different situations on board the ship such as Mess Women, Hospital Nurses &c.²⁴⁹

Among those 'best conducted' were three self-professed prostitutes, Ann Dyer, Mary Hampson and Ann Wright. Their past occupation may have been concealed until their arrival in Van Diemen's Land as it is uncertain at what stage their statement was recorded. The 'Ladies' must have recognised some glimmer of promise in Ann Dyer because her gaol report was unflinching in describing her as 'bad', having been four times in prison. And her behaviour in the colony did little to vindicate the ladies' trust. As with most female convicts Ann's colonial offences were minor but the nature of those offences may have dismayed the ladies of the committee, as they involved, 'secreting some prisoners for an improper purpose', 'out after hours under the influence of liquor', 'admitting a man into her Master's house' and, 'Out after hours and in a disorderly Ho[use]'.²⁵⁰ Mary Hampson was also classed as 'bad' on her gaol report and had two prior convictions. She had also spent four or five of her twenty two years on the town.²⁵¹ But the surgeon-superintendent described Mary as being well behaved on board in her role as assistant cook. Mary had only been in the colony for three weeks when she was punished for being drunk and disorderly. During the next four years she accumulated charges of absence, disorderly behaviour, misconduct, and absconding, until August 1845 when she was found in a common brothel. Ann Wright was also described as, 'very bad' on her gaol report and had been imprisoned several times during her three years on the town.²⁵²

²⁴⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/64 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1842).

²⁵⁰ TAHO CON40/1/4, Ann Dyer (299) per *Rajah* (1841), image 38.

²⁵¹ TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Hampson (405) per *Rajah* (1841), image 52.

²⁵² TAHO CON40/1/10, Ann Wright (422) per *Rajah* (1841), image 98.

A total of twenty one women were listed by the surgeon-superintendent as monitors on board the *Rajah*. It is uncertain whether all of those women were appointed by the Ladies' Committee or whether some were appointed on board. A search of the records has failed to locate the twenty four who were originally appointed by the Ladies' Committee. The three women who were identified as prostitutes were employed as a mess woman, ship woman and assistant cook. Ann Wright earned the approbation of 'Good'. Ann Dyer was deemed to be 'Good', and Mary Hampson as assistant cook received no specific judgement on her vocational abilities but was 'well behaved'.

It is impossible to determine just which qualities persuaded authorities to appoint the three women as monitors in spite of their unfavourable gaol records. All three were above average height.²⁵³ Ann Dyer was 160.5 centimetres, Mary Hampson was 163.9 and Ann Wright was 168.9 whereas the average height of all women on board was 155.5. The average height of all monitors was 158 centimetres. So perhaps their commanding height influenced the choice. The average age of women on board was 25.8 years and the average of monitors was 26.3 whereas Ann Dyer was 22, Mary 22 and Ann Wright was 23. Ann Dyer could read and write and the other two could read only.²⁵⁴

While most days offered monotonous repetition, visiting a port could be a source of excitement and distraction. The authority which the surgeons-superintendent held is evident by the frequency with which they initiated such stops. John Hamett justified his decision to call at Tenerife by the protracted sea-sickness particularly among the older women and those advanced in pregnancy.²⁵⁵ He argued that it was only a minor deviation from the ship's direct course. As they neared the Cape of Good Hope he decided that another stop at Table Bay was necessary in view of the remaining distance, and the large quantity of water consumed daily.

to afford the Convicts fresh meat and Vegetables, and thereby obviate Scurvy, and other bad states of the body; and to procure a supply of water adequate to meet all casual exigencies during the latter part of the voyage ... we were

²⁵³ For heights of female convicts see Stephen Nicholas and Peter Shergold, 'Convicts as Workers', in Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's past* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 81.

²⁵⁴ Heights and age are based on the description lists at TAHO CON19/1/1.

²⁵⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* (1840).

under the necessity of stopping 11 days at the Cape instead of a week which I had at first intended.²⁵⁶

The *Majestic* also pulled in at the Cape, whereas the failure of the *Mary* to do so was blamed for the many illnesses on board.²⁵⁷ Catherine Blakeney enjoyed her time at Tenerife as her entry on the *Persian* sick list reads, 'This woman has made too free with either wine or spirits, while lying at Tenerife.'²⁵⁸ Whilst they were able to restock with fresh water, vegetables and other provisions, such stops were also opportunities to introduce infectious diseases on board.²⁵⁹

Conclusion

Throughout the voyage the surgeon-superintendent continued to expand his file on each woman as he dutifully followed the regulations laid down by the Admiralty. Other than identifying some women as prostitutes, surgeons-superintendent did not document them any differently from other women. The comments about their behaviour revealed no pattern of harsher judgement nor moral outrage towards women who were prostitutes. They were given authority as monitors and they would have been instrumental in the construction of the *Rajah* quilt. Prostitutes shared messes and tasks, punishment and reward with the women not so labelled. In spite of his multiple roles the surgeon-superintendent was primarily a medical officer. Therefore a closer investigation of the health of women labelled as prostitutes was carried out to determine whether there were any marked differences between the two groups of women.

²⁵⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* (1840).

²⁵⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²⁵⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

²⁵⁹ McDonald and Shlomowitz, 'Mortality on Convict Voyages to Australia', p. 290.

CHAPTER 5: NINETEENTH-CENTURY MEDICINE

THE VOYAGE: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Introduction: Charlotte Williams' story

Two weeks after leaving London, the surgeon-superintendent of the *Persian* noted that Charlotte Williams was suffering from sea sickness and that she seemed greatly debilitated.¹ Charlotte was a mere sixteen years old and claimed to have been on the town for seven months when she relieved a gentleman of his watch. She was a Londoner and when she faced the Southwark Quarter Sessions, the magistrate determined that Charlotte should be transported for life, a harsh penalty for a sixteen year old first offender.² On examining his patient, Mr Paton noticed a skin eruption on Charlotte's forehead with a number of papillae clustered together to form an ulcer. He immediately recognised the symptoms of syphilis, 'Taking into consideration the mode of life which she has been living previous to her conviction'.³ Charlotte recovered from syphilis and was assigned as a nurse maid when she reached Hobart Town. In November 1835, eight years after arriving in the colony, Charlotte was granted permission to marry George Foght. Their marriage lasted over forty years and they had two children, one of whom survived to adulthood. In 1877 Charlotte died of bronchitis, fifty years after leaving the streets of Southwark.⁴

Charlotte may also have suffered from epilepsy, asthma or tuberculosis but unless her chronic condition became active, it remained undetected by the surgeon-superintendent

¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827) Surgeon-Superintendent James Patton.

² TAHO CON40/1/9, Charlotte Williams (98W) per *Persian* (1827), image 271.

³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

⁴ TAHO RGD35/146, Register-General's Department, Register of Deaths (683), 1877, Hobart. Her age was given as sixty four on her death record, so if that was correct it would have meant that sixteen was the upper limit of her age on arrival. Charlotte died in Collins Street, Hobart of chronic bronchitis in 1877. A son was born in 1843: RGD33/1/1, Register-General's Department, Register of Births (1216) Hobart, and a daughter in 1841 who was not registered but married in 1859: RGD37/1/18, Register-General's Department, Marriage Register (108) Hobart, 1859 aged eighteen.

and absent from his journal. Not so her bout of syphilis which is forever recorded in the *Persian's* medical case notes. These limitations render any analysis of shipboard health only partial and Jackson is correct in that the surgeon's journal was never meant to be a complete picture of on-board health, but rather an account of convicts who took ill during the voyage.⁵ The surgeon's journal documented his version of the significant medical events of the voyage.

So while it is valuable to have detailed notes for ten patients on the *Hector*, the health and well being of the other 124 women went un-remarked except as part of a general statement.⁶ Even an understanding of those ten cases can be diminished by obstacles such as the surgeon-superintendent's handwriting and his subjective judgements about his patients. Comparative assessments are also constrained by possible differences in recording practices of the surgeons-superintendent.⁷ For example the *East London* recorded no treatment for women labelled as prostitutes, yet 18 per cent of women on board were so identified.⁸ In fact, with two exceptions, the only women recorded in the journal were those who died. The surgeon-superintendent may have been so occupied treating serious illnesses that he recorded only those cases which he suspected would be scrutinised by the Admiralty. The ship is notable for its high death rate in a period when death rates had been significantly reduced.

Omissions inherent in this record set could also result from an active choice on the part of some women to reject medical assistance. Coming from a socio-economic group in which medical intervention was unaffordable or a final resort, recourse to a physician may have been culturally alien. The incidence of various illnesses, based on a diagnosis by the surgeon-superintendent, has been used in this study to determine their prevalence among the prostitute population. Findings are therefore subject not only to his skill and experience, but to the current level of medical knowledge. Any retrospective diagnosis on the part of an historian is ultimately an exercise in speculation.⁹

⁵ R V Jackson, 'Sickness and Health on Australia's Female Convict Ships, 1821-1840', *International Journal of Maritime History*, vol. 18, no. 2 (2006), p. 68.

⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/32 Reel 3197, Journal of the *Hector* (1835) Surgeon-Superintendent Morgan Price.

⁷ Jackson, 'Sickness and Health', p. 75.

⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843) Surgeon-Superintendent Edward Caldwell.

⁹ See Christopher Hamlin, 'Predisposing Causes and Public Health in Early Nineteenth-Century Medical Thought', *Social History of Medicine*, 5, 1 (1992), p. 57.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the medical fraternity strove to present itself as a systematic and coherent professional group.¹⁰ This strategy was necessary to provide credible practitioners in a world where medical knowledge had become more scientific, education more systematic, and professional standards were linked by a unified medical fraternity.¹¹ An early pioneer of this evolution was Dr William Cullen who in 1769 developed the nosological table which became the guide to the classification of illnesses for surgeons-superintendent on transports. A medical diagnosis was therefore accommodated within the options offered by this table. The division into classes and then orders meant a systematic and comparable set of records the like of which was not commonly found in civilian medical practice.¹² This feature of the journals allows for a significant degree of comparison between voyages, so even with the limitations of such records, an analysis can be made of the types of illnesses which troubled the women who feature in this study.

It is a relatively simple exercise to locate former prostitutes who arrived in Van Diemen's Land on the forty five ships because multiple record groups are available. But five of those ships landed women in New South Wales before continuing to Van Diemen's Land, and without comparable record sets the total number of prostitutes cannot be known. Thus if the numbers of prostitutes landed in New South Wales is unknown due to a lack of records, then the likelihood of a prostitute being treated on those five ships is also unknown. Jackson made adjustments for ships in his study of arrivals to New South Wales where he found the reverse problem.¹³ Thirty seven ships were initially examined and analysed for a study not only of the health of prostitutes but also a comparison with the non-prostitute population. As previously noted the journals are sometimes difficult to decipher and surgeons at times made errors in recording women's names. So in order to guarantee accuracy and reliability in the identification of individual women from the prostitute and non-prostitute population, a smaller subset of twenty two ships was selected with a total number of 4,544 women.¹⁴ They arrived in

¹⁰ Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1988), p. 142.

¹¹ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 142.

¹² Ian Brand and Mark Staniforth, 'Care and Control: Female Convict Transportation Voyages to Van Diemen's Land, 1818-1853', *The Great Circle* (Australian National Maritime Museum), vol. 13, no. 2 (1991), pp. 25-26.

¹³ Jackson, 'Sickness and Health', p. 70.

¹⁴ Appendix I: List of ships used to examine the medical treatment of female convicts.

Van Diemen's Land between 1829 and 1843. Whilst the remaining ships have been excluded from the statistical analysis of health, the ships nevertheless provide qualitative information.

The methodology is a simple enumeration of women recorded as being treated by the surgeon-superintendent for medical reasons as opposed to disciplinary. Normal births and vaccinations have been excluded. Since a lower percentage of prostitutes gave birth during the voyages, the inclusion of births may have given an incorrect indication of the overall health of the non-prostitute population. The difficulty associated with using such a simplistic indicator faced Jackson in his analysis.¹⁵ Since this study was seeking a comparative assessment of the two cohorts, all other treatable conditions were included and no separate scale of severity of condition was attempted. Both daily case notes and sick lists were used to determine numbers since a nominal record was necessary to distinguish between prostitutes and non-prostitutes for the analysis. For this reason the nosological table was of less value and only consulted when a discrepancy arose in overall numbers treated.

While the number of women said to be on each ship varies according to the source, I have attempted to correct this by using the surgeons' records and cross referencing these with the description lists, CON40 records, indents and Charles Bateson's estimates.¹⁶ In this respect it has been important to establish the number of women embarked, since barring some accidents, women who died during the voyage were usually treated. However these figures are based on what was recorded in the journal and do not necessarily reflect actual treatment levels. Some surgeons may only have documented severe cases which they regarded as acute, chronic or fatal. Some ships do not have sick lists, meaning that they are not as comprehensive an account of all who were treated since the sick lists usually yield higher numbers than the case notes. So while the ships without sick lists are not as comprehensive, they are still valid for a comparative study

¹⁵ Jackson, 'Sickness and Health', p. 84.

¹⁶ Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships 1787-1868* (Artarmon [New South Wales], 1974); TAHO CON19, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853; CON40 Conduct registers of female convicts arriving in the period of the assignment system, January 1803- December 1843; TAHO CON15, Indents of female convicts 1831-1853; ML TP D3 Reel CY 1195, TP D4 Reel CY1196, TP D5 Reel CY 1197, TP Z4-9 Reel CY1241, TP 11 Reel CY 1242, TP 21 Reel CY 1273, TP 22 Reel CY 1274, TP 23 Reel CY 1275, 24 Reel CY 1276 , TP 25 Reel CY 1277; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101, Surgeons' journals.

of prostitutes versus non-prostitutes because both should be equally represented in the case notes. The *Edward* is such an example where only the detailed treatment for a few actual cases is available. The low percentage of recorded treatment for the ship is probably not a true indication of the treatment given.

Using this data it has proved possible to calculate the following:

1. Percentage of prostitutes treated during the voyage
2. Percentage of prostitutes treated compared with percentage of non-prostitutes
3. Percentage of prostitutes and non-prostitutes treated for venereal disease and hysteria

The first general observation from this data is that the level of treatment offered everyone on board seemed dependent on the circumstances of the surgeon-superintendent. Thus some were able to treat a high percentage of women be they prostitute or not, while others recorded a lower percentage of treatment rates for both groups. The surgeon-superintendent who appeared most generous with his time was James Ellis on the *Westmoreland* who managed uniformly to treat 77.5 per cent of prostitutes and 77.2 per cent of non-prostitutes. This was in contrast to Samuel Mackey on the *Waverley* who treated only 2.3 per cent of prostitutes and 7.5 per cent of non-prostitutes.

Surgeon-superintendent Richard Lewis completed multiple voyages caring for female convicts. (Table 5.1 below)

Table 5.1: Treatment levels by percentage on multiple voyages undertaken by Surgeon-Superintendent Richard Lewis

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Prostitute</u>	<u>Non Prostitute</u>
<i>America</i>	1831	36.1	42.7
<i>Hope</i>	1842	35.6	37.5

Source: PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1-2 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831) Surgeon-Superintendent Richard Lewis

It appears from the table that Lewis was consistent in the amount of attention he gave the women in his care. His journal revealed a compassionate and considerate practitioner who allowed women on the *America* a degree of agency and self determination in their own treatment.

When examining the relationship between the patient who had been identified as a prostitute and the surgeon-superintendent, it is important to acknowledge factors which may have affected the surgeon's response to his patient. The surgeon-superintendent possessed a greater awareness of the women's background than most other officials, having not only documentary evidence but intimate physical knowledge of his patient. He may therefore have actively resisted treating the women who he knew to be prostitutes. James Hall realised the perils involved in dealing with one particular female patient who was identified as a prostitute. He was obliged to warn other medical officers, who might risk an

attempt on their professional and moral character - this young woman was able at any time to excite various symptoms of hysteria and greatly accelerate the pulse and often times she feigned a retention of urine, with all the attendant symptoms in order, especially in the middle of the night, that I might be urged to introduce the catheter!¹⁷

Alternatively that cohort may have been reluctant to seek medical assistance. It has also been suggested that during the nineteenth-century prostitutes may have been healthier than the general female population.¹⁸ The risks to their health cannot be underestimated but must also be remembered that a prostitute's body was her investment. Perhaps this cohort succeeded in safeguarding that investment within the limitations of their lifestyle. The supplementary incomes earned from prostitution may have ensured that they were better fed and clothed than other women sentenced to transportation. It is also possible that through active choice or infertility caused by venereal disease, prostitutes may have less often faced the hazards of childbirth and related complications than other women.

Judith Walkowitz found that in the late nineteenth century prostitutes in Plymouth and Southampton regarded their own general standard of health to be better than that of dressmakers and laundresses.¹⁹ Such opinions were held in the 1840s by George

¹⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822) Surgeon-Superintendent James Hall.

¹⁸ George Drysdale, *The Elements of Social Science; or, Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion* (London, 1861 [1854]), p. 255, online: <http://www.google.com.au/books?id=KG17KV1ezZMC>, (6 January 2010).

¹⁹ Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, class and the state* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 195.

Drysdale and Parent-Duchâtelet who challenged conventional opinion by arguing that ‘their mode of life with all its intemperance, and exposure to infection and inclemencies of the weather, is a much healthier one on the whole, than that of the needlewomen, sempstresses, and other females, whose occupations are of a sedentary and unrelaxing nature.’²⁰

Putting aside the theories of nineteenth-century observers, it is evident that poverty and destitution drove many women to prostitution. It might therefore be expected that women identified as prostitutes would on the contrary possess a poor standard of health. If one factors in the subsequent dangers associated with prostitution such as venereal disease, alcoholism and the risk of physical violence, then this cohort of women might also be expected to require a high level of medical attention. Given that such treatment was free and once at sea could have no influence on their immediate fate, then the hypothesis that prostitutes would appear more frequently in the medical journals is not unreasonable. A comparative analysis of the level of treatment for prostitutes compared to non-prostitutes en route to Van Diemen's Land revealed that a higher percentage of non-prostitutes than prostitutes were treated on fourteen of the twenty two ships, whereas prostitutes were more frequently treated on eight ships. (Table 5.2 below) Although the difference is small it is evident that prostitutes did receive more treatment.

²⁰ Drysdale, *The Elements of Social Science*, p. 255.

Table 5.2: **Percentage of prostitutes and non-prostitutes treated on voyages to Van Diemen's Land 1829-1843**

<i>Ship</i>	<i>Year</i>	Total embarked	Prost embarked	Prost treated	Non-prost embarked	Non-prost treated
<i>America (2)</i>	1831	189	72	36.1	117	42.7
<i>Arab</i>	1836	132	50	24	82	32.9
<i>Atwick</i>	1838	151	43	30.2	108	14.8
<i>Edward</i>	1834	151	36	2.8	115	6.1
<i>Emma Eugenia</i>	1842	191	83	26.5	108	37
<i>Garland Grove</i>	1843	191	53	5.7	138	12.9
<i>Gilbert Henderson</i>	1840	184	51	49	133	59.8
<i>Harmony</i>	1829	100	45	33.3	55	21.8
<i>Hope</i>	1842	141	45	35.6	96	37.5
<i>Hydery</i>	1832	149	41	53.7	108	41.7
<i>Majestic</i>	1839	123	35	34.3	88	34.5
<i>Margaret</i>	1843	152	43	27.9	109	34.9
<i>Mary</i>	1831	151	34	26.5	117	28.2
<i>Mary Anne</i>	1841	128	32	28.1	96	25
<i>Nautilus</i>	1838	133	72	74.3	61	72.3
<i>New Grove</i>	1835	165	19	52.6	146	47.3
<i>Rajah</i>	1841	180	49	4.1	131	6.9
<i>Royal Admiral</i>	1842	204	54	61.8	150	62.4
<i>Waverley</i>	1842	149	43	2.3	106	7.5
<i>Westmoreland</i>	1836	185	71	77.5	114	77.2
<i>William Bryan</i>	1833	130	27	55.6	103	47.6
<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	204	64	53.1	140	59.3
Totals		3483	1062	36.14	2421	36.83

Source: PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101 (22 ships)

To more accurately assess treatment for the two cohorts a breakdown of levels of treatment within age groups was also carried out. For this, the only valid cases were those for which the age was available. That provided 2382 non-prostitutes and 1036 prostitutes from the twenty two ships. (Table 5.3 below)

Table 5.3: **Ages of women who received treatment on voyages to Van Diemen's Land**

Age	<u>Non-prostitutes treated</u>			<u>Prostitutes treated</u>		
	Total no.	No. treated	%	Total no.	No. treated	%
<15	24	6	25.0	0	0	0.0
15-19	378	107	28.3	253	88	34.8
20-24	586	234	39.9	505	207	41.0
25-29	474	197	41.6	203	77	37.9
30-34	325	116	35.7	56	24	42.9
35-39	209	80	38.3	13	3	23.1
40-44	180	62	34.4	2	0	0.0
45-49	92	32	34.8	3	0	0.0
50+	114	40	35.1	1	0	0.0
	2382	874	36.7	1036	399	38.5

Source: PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101

Prostitutes were not represented in the under 15 age group, but they were more likely to be treated within the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups. The greatest disparity was within the 35-39 group where non prostitutes were 15 per cent more likely to be treated. The categories of 40 years and over had few prostitutes. Taking age into consideration the differences in rates of treatment for former prostitutes and non-prostitutes is again not significant. Former prostitutes who were treated were more likely to be diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease which may explain the higher percentage of treatment in the 15-24 year age group.

Venereal disease

The physical ravages of venereal disease provided a popular topic for evangelists and moral reformers and demonstrated the sordid realities of prostitution. Given the link between prostitution and crime, any cohort of convict women might be expected to possess high levels of sexually transmitted diseases with identified prostitutes registering an even greater incidence. This was found to be the case, in that venereal disease was more often diagnosed among the prostitute population which registered 35.1 cases for every 1000 admissions to the sick list compared with only 14.4 within the non-prostitute population. (Table 5.4 below)

Table 5.4: **Incidence of treatment for venereal disease**

	Nos Episodes	Mean Age	Length of treatment (days)	Nos cases	STDS per 1000 admissions
Prostitutes	741	22.5	10.3	26	35.1
Non-prostitutes	2087	28.2	12.3	30	14.4
All	2830	26.7	11.8	56	19.8

Source: *Founders and Survivors* (Sick lists)

The number of women who carried sexually transmitted diseases could have been considerably higher given the nature of the infection. Syphilis could sustain periods of dormancy meaning that a woman suffering from or carrying syphilis or gonorrhoea could make the voyage and be untroubled by symptoms during that time. In 1869 the *Westminster Review* commented on ‘the long vitality of the virus and the extraordinary manner in which it may lurk for years’.²¹ It is also possible that some illnesses were symptomatic of sexually transmitted diseases but not recorded as such by the surgeon-superintendent. Gonorrhoea was difficult to diagnose in women and was subject to a series of medical fallacies which affected its diagnosis and treatment.²² Doctors therefore greatly underestimated the extent and seriousness of gonorrhoea in women. It is also possible that women suffering from venereal disease who were most seriously and visibly affected may not have been embarked in the first place. And it must be reiterated that in spite of the presence of some women who were medically unfit for the voyage, it was a cohort which was healthier than the general female prison population of Britain.

While the term ‘venereal disease’ was used to describe a variety of diseases, Maria Luddy believed that although the distinction between syphilis and gonorrhoea was made at the end of the eighteenth century it was only confirmed in 1837. A third type called ‘soft chancre’ was not recognised until 1852.²³ Yet the surgeons-superintendent appeared to be making a distinction between the three conditions by 1827, although the

²¹ *Westminster Review*, vol. 36, 1869, ‘Prostitution in Relation to the National Health’, in *Prostitution in the Victorian Age: debates on the issue from 19th century critical journals* (Introduction by Keith Nield) (Westmead, 1973), p. 209.

²² Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 54.

²³ Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society 1800-1940* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 124.

accuracy of that diagnosis is uncertain. Syphilis was considered to be of greater concern than gonorrhoea.²⁴ It was defined as an acute and chronic infectious disease caused by *Treponema pallidum*, and transmitted by direct contact, usually through sexual intercourse. The first symptom was a chancre, followed by slight fever and other primary constitutional symptoms before a skin eruption appeared.²⁵ A sore throat and generalised aching pain also accompanied syphilis.²⁶ Surgeon-Superintendent Evans believed that Janet Torrens carried the disease when he observed the symptoms of a 'sore throat, with mottled colour, eruptions pervading almost every part of the body'.²⁷

Alice Dowland, a prostitute from Sligo, was suffering from a sexually transmitted disease when she joined the *Arab* at Woolwich. Surgeon-Superintendent Rogers observed 'a deep foul ulcer on the inside of the left hip about 6 inches in circumference, [she] says it commenced as a small pimple close beside the labia pudenda'.²⁸ Alice must have preferred transportation to detention in an English gaol for she concealed her illness from the surgeon at Salford, lest she should be detained in the prison there. This was Alice's fourth bout of venereal disease. Three months after sailing, a large scorbutic ulcer appeared on her left leg which increased in size, while another swelling was noticeable on her right knee joint. Mr Rogers also treated sixteen year old Jane Marshall for 'several large foul venereal ulcers situated on the inner surface of the labium pudenda, with a swelling in both groins'.²⁹ She had been a patient in Exeter Gaol and was described as being very ill when taken from there to the *Arab*. Rogers treated her for both gonorrhoea and syphilis.

Gonorrhoea was an infectious venereal disease attributed to 'impure connexion'.³⁰ It was described as a contagious catarrhal inflammation of the genital mucous membrane, transmitted chiefly by coitus and caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoea*.³¹ Gleet and clap

²⁴ Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*, p. 125.

²⁵ *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, 25th Edition (Baltimore, 1990 [1911]), p. 1544.

²⁶ Amy Kamphuis, 'Bleeding, Blistering and Observations of the Bowel: A Comparative Analysis of Hospital Treatment in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania, 2012, Appendix 2: Glossary of Diseases and Conditions, p. 328.

²⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829) Surgeon-Superintendent William Evans.

²⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/4 Reel 3188, Journal of the *Arab* (1836) Surgeon-Superintendent William Rogers.

²⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/4 Reel 3188, Journal of the *Arab* (1836).

³⁰ Kamphuis, 'Bleeding, Blistering and Observations of the Bowel', p. 324.

³¹ *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, p. 664.

were alternative terms for gonorrhoea, gleet referring also to the discharge caused by the condition.³² Gleet, was the term most frequently used by surgeons-superintendent to describe a woman's condition, whereas gonorrhoea was the diagnosis more often recorded for male crew members. It was diagnosed in Mary Roberts when she complained of difficulty passing urine and 'swelling and soreness in private parts'.³³ Surgeon-Superintendent Sproule was confident of his diagnosis since five weeks earlier Mary had broken out of the prison under cover of darkness and was 'infected by the man she went with'. Her partner had contracted gonorrhoea during a stop at Madeira four weeks into the voyage to Van Diemen's Land.

As the statistics reveal the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases was not confined to women identified as prostitutes, although it occurred more frequently within that cohort. Rose Quinn, Rose Carroll, Mary Healy and Mary Ann Holland died en route to Van Diemen's Land and each was treated for syphilis on board the *East London* but none was identified as a prostitute.³⁴ Quinn had been a patient in the Belfast Infirmary with secondary symptoms of syphilis for six months prior to her embarkation. It is possible that if the four women were prostitutes it may have been recorded on their original gaol returns which have not been located. If the identification was not made on earlier records, a further source of identification was the surgeon's journal. The nature of the medical crisis on board the *East London* could explain the brevity of this particular journal but an alternative opinion might suggest that such a crisis would have necessitated more detailed entries. Their deaths *en route* removed the final option of self identification on arrival. Yet the presence of venereal disease in the non-prostitute population is not unexpected, given that venereal disease may have been contracted through infected husbands and lovers rather than by engaging in commercial sex. The infected woman may also have been a victim of rape or sexual abuse.

The varied symptoms which accompanied venereal disease guaranteed that treatment would be diverse. Mercury, or 'the mineral', was administered in the form of 'blue

³² Kamphuis, 'Bleeding, Blistering and Observations of the Bowel', p. 324.

³³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/12 Reel 3190, Journal of the *Borneo* (1828) Surgeon-Superintendent Oliver Sproule; TAHO CON40/1/7, Mary Roberts (68R) per *Borneo* (1828), image 270.

³⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843), Rose Quinn; Rose Carroll; Mary Healy; Mary Ann Holland .

pills', a solution or an ointment, and proved to be the most common treatment.³⁵ Mixtures such as 'lotio hydrargyri oxidum flavum' (a lotion), 'oxymel hydrargyri' (a solution of honey and mercury) and 'potasse hydrargyri', a pill of mercury and iodide of potassium, were all prescribed in the early nineteenth century.³⁶ The progress of the disease and its treatment can be plotted in Rebecca Nichols' case notes on board the *Garland Grove*.³⁷ Rebecca had previously undergone two courses of treatment for venereal disease, the most recent in prison. Surgeon-Superintendent Bland noted that 'on both occasions the Mineral was given to the extent, that her tongue was swollen hanging out of her mouth and in a state of ulceration'.³⁸

Salivation was achieved by the application of mercury as an ointment or pill. The patient was then kept warm and began to produce copious amounts of saliva with the aim of ridding the body of the poison. Treatment could continue for four to six weeks during which time the side effects included internal pain, intense nausea, permanent damage to the mouth, loss of teeth, gum damage, and complete loss of the uvula.³⁹ Bland found that even the smallest dose had an immediate effect upon Rebecca's mouth. She also experienced severe pains in her knees and her left forearm, and a slight eruption on both arms eventually extended over her body in small itchy pimples. An ulcer then formed on Rebecca's forehead and a ragged deep ulcer on the inside of her right thigh, the site of a former sore. Her wrists and ankles were swollen and painful to touch. Rebecca complained of spasms, her menstruation was irregular and she looked much older than her eighteen years. The mercury caused persistent nausea which prevented her from retaining solid food and as a result she became emaciated and 'died at 9 a.m. almost a skeleton.' Bland accepted that her death was inevitable: 'The

³⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827) James Patton described the treatment for Charlotte Williams.

³⁶ Claude Quézel (trans. Judith Braddock and Brian Pike), *History of Syphilis* (Baltimore, 1992), p. 117; Kamphuis, 'Bleeding, Blistering and Observations of the Bowel', pp. 382, 384, 385.

³⁷ She is not listed as a prostitute but since she died en route from secondary syphilitic symptoms, she is another woman who had no opportunity to self identify on arrival.

³⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Garland Grove* (1843) Surgeon-Superintendent William Bland.

³⁹ Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*, p. 125; For a discussion on the antisalivationist approach to treatment see: Kevin P. Siena, 'The "Foul Disease" and Privacy: The Effects of Venereal Disease and Patient Demand on the Medical Marketplace in Early Modern London', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 75, no. 2 (Summer, 2001), pp. 208-212.

constitution having been much injured from the life she confessed to have led, and the injurious adhibition of Mercury.’⁴⁰

Dr Foreman on the *Platina* noted that mercury treatment reduced the patients’ health, and exposed them to a greater risk of scurvy.⁴¹ Steps were thus taken on the *Lady of the Lake* to mitigate those harmful side effects, whereby Mr Evans attempted to restore Janet Torren’s system with a generous diet prior to prescribing mercury. Mercury was then administered both internally and externally, and continued for three and a half weeks. When Janet’s pain returned, very minute doses of ‘Bi chloride of Mercury’ in solution were given. Yet her ultimate recovery was attributed more to the favourable weather than the medication.⁴² Janet continued to receive a full diet including wine for the remainder of the voyage.⁴³

Sarah Marvin was also prescribed a course of mercury on board the *Westmoreland*, and her chancres were frequently washed in a solution of one tablespoonful of chloride of lime, to a gallon of sea water. She was pronounced cured and discharged ‘without the application of any other remedy.’⁴⁴ Mary Robert’s treatment for gonorrhoea included sulphate of magnesia applied externally and barley water given as a supplement to her diet.⁴⁵ Surgeon-Superintendent William Rogers recognised that salt provisions were detrimental to sufferers of sexually transmitted diseases and he suspected that Alice Dowland was eating salt meat in the mess, thereby obstructing his treatment. She was therefore confined in the hospital where her diet was closely monitored.⁴⁶ A similar discovery was made on the *Navarino* where Surgeon-Superintendent Clarke decided that cases of gonorrhoea were in reality old gleet which caused no inconvenience as long as the women lived on fresh provisions. He observed that ‘the ‘Acrimony’ of the women’s urine caused by a diet of salted provisions, reactivated the disease by irritating

⁴⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Garland Grove* (1843).

⁴¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/60 Reel 3207, Journal of the *Platina* (1837) Surgeon-Superintendent George E Foreman.

⁴² ‘hydrargyri Bichloride’ a mercury powder was used on skin eruptions and ulcers: Kamphuis, ‘Bleeding, Blistering and Observations of the Bowel’, p. 379.

⁴³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

⁴⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/74 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Westmoreland* (1836) Surgeon-Superintendent James Ellis.

⁴⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/12 Reel 3190, Journal of the *Borneo* (1828).

⁴⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/4 Reel 3188, Journal of the *Arab* (1836).

old gleans, and in some cases causing very large excoriations of the labia.⁴⁷ Pain management was frequently offered in the form of opiates to women suffering from secondary symptoms of venereal disease. Rebecca Nichols had received thirty drops of laudanum to relieve the pain before her death.⁴⁸

Surgeon-Superintendent Kidd was prepared to treat Harriet Baker, Mary Hollings and Sarah Taylor for venereal disease, but was not disposed to deal with Sarah Connolly.⁴⁹ Instead she was re-landed and sent to the Horsemonger Lane Gaol. Harriet Baker who remained on board was one of six patients diagnosed with syphilis on the *Emma Eugenia*.⁵⁰ Harriet was treated for chancres and warts on her genitals which were frequently bathed with a weak solution of 'nitre sulphas' and warm water, then a poultice was applied.⁵¹ Mercury pills were also a significant part of Harriet's treatment and within a few days her mouth and gums became affected and after two weeks her doctor noted that her mouth was very sore and there was 'much ptyalism'.⁵² 'Decocta sarsae' or decoction of sarsaparilla in solution was another preparation employed to treat herpes and syphilis.⁵³

Apart from surgeons-superintendent seeking causes for venereal disease in a woman's lifestyle, it is not evident that they approached the patient with the same revulsion which is apparent in the literature of the mid to late nineteenth century. That is not to suggest that the surgeons-superintendent were particularly compassionate but nor did they discriminate against patients with venereal disease. The CON40 records which contain a category of *Surgeon's Report* indicate the same range of character assessments present in the records of women who were not diagnosed with the disease.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841) Surgeon-Superintendent James L. Clarke.

⁴⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Garland Grove* (1843).

⁴⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/25 Reel 3195, Journal of the *Emma Eugenia* (1842) Surgeon-Superintendent Jonathan Kidd.

⁵⁰ TAHO CON40/1/2, Harriet Baker (531B) per *Emma Eugenia* (1842), image 100.

⁵¹ Kamphuis, 'Bleeding, Blistering and Observations of the Bowel', p. 390, 'spirits of nitre' (nitric acid, aqua fortis) was a nitric acid solution applied to ulcers and diluted with water.

⁵² Ptyalism is excessive salivation a side effect of mercury treatment.

⁵³ Kamphuis, 'Bleeding, Blistering and Observations of the Bowel', p. 74.

⁵⁴ Appendix J: Surgeons' reports for women treated for venereal disease.

Routine case notes

While sexually transmitted diseases were present to a greater extent among the women identified as prostitutes, they were also vulnerable to the common ailments which afflicted all passengers on sea voyages at the time. A survey of illnesses which most often caused women identified as prostitutes to consult the surgeon-superintendent was next undertaken. All ships which have surviving surgeon's journals were included.

Constipation, otherwise known as costiveness, or obstipatia, was the most frequently occurring ailment. While Jackson found that surgeons did not usually record cases of constipation unless other symptoms were present, the surgeons-superintendent treating women on the transports to Van Diemen's Land frequently recorded its presence as a sole symptom.⁵⁵ It was troublesome on the *Mermaid* and *New Grove*, where it was attributed to the change in diet, salt meat, and the weather.⁵⁶ The *Westmoreland* recorded one hundred and sixty seven cases of obstipatia, thirty two of which were diagnosed in women identified as prostitutes.⁵⁷ Surgeons-superintendent who blamed the ship diet for their high recourse to purgatives were of course correct. Diet and a rationed supply of water would have contributed to the epidemic. That link was frequently discussed by pre-eminent physicians particularly those who specialised in 'female' diseases.⁵⁸

Once a diagnosis was settled upon, it was the task of the surgeon-superintendent to determine a course of treatment. To relieve the constipation which so many women experienced surgeons-superintendent administered purgative medicines. James Hall complained that the requests for purgative pills were frequently so numerous as to interfere with other important duties.⁵⁹ Two decades later women were similarly afflicted when the surgeon-superintendent of the *Margaret* believed confinement and

⁵⁵ Jackson, 'Sickness and Health', p. 69.

⁵⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3206, Journal of the *New Grove* (1835) Surgeon-Superintendent David Thomson; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/53 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mermaid* (1828) Surgeon-Superintendent James Gilchrist.

⁵⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/74 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Westmoreland* (1836) Surgeon-Superintendent James Ellis.

⁵⁸ William P Dewees, *A Treatise on the Diseases of Females* (Philadelphia, 1854), p. 207, online: http://www.google.com.au/books?id=WjstTVeXZpgC&redir_esc=y (30 July 2011); Edward H Dixon, *Woman and Her Diseases, from the Cradle to the Grave: Adapted Exclusively to her Instruction in the Physiology of Her System and all the Diseases of Her Critical Periods* (New York, 1847), p. 181, online: http://www.google.com.au/books?id=tNv-zZI ITAC&redir_esc=y (30 July 2011).

⁵⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822).

lack of exercise were responsible for the high demand for purgatives.⁶⁰ Scammony, gamboge, colocynth, and aloes were highly effective cathartics acting as an extreme irritant upon the bowels.⁶¹ Alternative treatments like castor oil, rhubarb and clyster were milder.⁶² Castor oil was invaluable for constipation on the *Gilbert Henderson* where it was given to pregnant women before and after delivery, and to young children and newborns. Constipation was so pervasive that John Hamett was obliged to administer purgatives to almost every woman on board.⁶³ He made a combined entry for sixty one women for the month of August recording that they had all been treated for costiveness. And since castor oil was repeatedly administered, the two and a half pounds which was provided by the Medical Storekeeper at Deptford, proved insufficient. Hamett purchased a further two pounds at Tenerife and another pound at the Cape of Good Hope.⁶⁴ Maria Rivers was given strong purgatives after being constipated for a week. The purgatives were repeated but to no avail. When her whole abdomen was swollen she was again purged until her bowels moved. Her pain returned, and Dr Malcolm noted that ‘she now has so strong dislike of medicines of any kind’.⁶⁵

Diarrhoea was another complaint which caused prostitutes to consult the surgeon-superintendent. It was blamed for the high death toll on the *East London* where seventeen women and fourteen children died. Unlike constipation, diarrhoea was a water and food borne disease so surgeons-superintendent were partially correct when they attributed it to a change of diet. Prostitute Janet McLean contracted diarrhoea during the three months she spent at Edinburgh Gaol prior to embarking on the *Nautilus*.⁶⁶ Her body seemed locked in a constant battle with the illness throughout the voyage.⁶⁷ She was joined on board by Jane Brown who was already suffering from diarrhoea and who was said to possess a pallid, emaciated and ‘questionable

⁶⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/48 Reel 3203, Journal of the *Margaret* (1843) Surgeon-Superintendent John Arnold Mould.

⁶¹ Dewess, *Treatise*, p. 188.

⁶² Dewess, *Treatise*, p. 344.

⁶³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* (1840) Surgeon-Superintendent Sir John Hamett.

⁶⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* (1840).

⁶⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827) Surgeon-Superintendent Robert Malcolm.

⁶⁶ TAHO CON40/1/6, Janet McLean (181L) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 216.

⁶⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838) Surgeon-Superintendent John G Stewart.

appearance'.⁶⁸ Dr Stewart observed that she looked older than her stated twenty eight years. He listed Jane's symptoms as purging, sinking, watery stools, faintness, pains in lower part of abdomen, and an anxious countenance. In spite of her fatal symptoms he suggested that her life might have been saved if the weather had been cooler.⁶⁹ Anne Johnson who had spent six months on the town in Antrim prior to her conviction, managed to survive a bout of diarrhoea.⁷⁰ Yet it proved fatal to two of her *Mexborough* shipmates who had no recorded history of prostitution.⁷¹

Catarrh closely followed diarrhoea as an illness likely to bring a prostitute to the attention of the surgeon-superintendent. The general term 'catarrh' referred to an inflammation of a mucous membrane and could include: bronchial catarrh (bronchitis), suffocative catarrh (croup), urethral catarrh (gleet), and vaginal catarrh (leucorrhoea).⁷² In the journals it generally referred to bronchial catarrh, affected the air passages of the head and throat and was characterised by a cough, thirst, lassitude, fever, watery eyes, and increased secretions from the air passages. These are symptoms which could be associated with the common cold and which are highly infectious. Elizabeth Bannister had been on the town in Salford before her conviction for petty larceny saw her board the *Brothers* in 1824. Surgeon-Superintendent James Hall treated her for coldness of the body, pains in the forehead and eyes, soreness and pains in the limbs, sneezing, loss of appetite, and watering eyes.⁷³ Equally familiar to sufferers today were the symptoms experienced by Elizabeth Rix on the *Harmony* which included a cough, white tongue, loss of strength and appetite, dull pain in the head, fullness of the nose, watery eyes, and pain in the chest.⁷⁴ Although the symptoms may seem recognisable today, the treatment was peculiar to the nineteenth century. A patient on the *America* was prescribed four grains of 'submuriate of mercury' and five grains of 'antimonial powder' followed by

⁶⁸ TAHO CON40/1/2, Jane Brown (400B) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 56; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁶⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁷⁰ TAHO CON40/1/6, Anne Johnson (206J) per *Mexborough* (1841), image 138.

⁷¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/53 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mexborough* (1841) Surgeon-Superintendent Jonathan S Hampton.

⁷² *Vitalogy: An Encyclopedia of Health and Home*, E H Ruddock (ed.) (Chicago, 1932 [1899]), pp. 420-421.

⁷³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/13 Reel 3190, Journal of the *Brothers* (1824) Surgeon-Superintendent James Hall.

⁷⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/32 Reel 319, Journal of the *Harmony* (1829) Surgeon-Superintendent William Clifford.

six drams of ‘vitriolated magnesia’ in an infusion of senna which caused vomiting and relief of the bowels.⁷⁵

Frances Clark was treated on the *America* and shared the catarrhal symptoms, but they were more restricted to her lungs. She surrendered twelve ounces of blood, after which she was given calomel (a compound of mercury used as a cathartic) followed by a saline purgative. When the pain in her chest became troublesome, a blister was applied. She was also given twelve grains of ‘Pulv. Ipecai comp.’ at bed time.⁷⁶ A case of chronic catarrh on the *Majestic* was treated by repeated blistering.⁷⁷ The process of blistering or vesiculation was achieved with heat or a vesiculating agent.⁷⁸ Prostitutes were also blistered for such ailments as lynchus, asthma, scorbutus, pleuritis, pyrexia, cephalagia, and seasickness.⁷⁹ On the *Westmoreland* catarrh was so common that Dr Ellis simply listed the names of sufferers in the margin of his journal and collectively prescribed ‘saline & mercurial purgatives’, ‘Antimonial Diaphoretics’, and ‘Epispastics’. He noted that all were discharged cured. The eight women included prostitutes Ann Buchanan, Mary Connell and Mary Murphy each of whom was treated and described in precisely the same manner as non-prostitutes.⁸⁰ Phlebotomy was prescribed for Sarah Wilkinson, who had received a chill from sleeping near the hatchway of the *Persian*.⁸¹ And while it gave relief, Surgeon-Superintendent Patton regretted that Sarah’s diet of salt rations and the lengthy voyage precluded his taking more blood.

McDonald and Shlomowitz believed that acute infectious diseases, especially typhus and dysentery, caused more deaths on convict transports than chronic illness.⁸² And while dysentery was recorded, it was less likely than diarrhoea to afflict the women. It

⁷⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831), Surgeon-Superintendent Richard Lewis.

⁷⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831).

⁷⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/46 Reel 3202, Journal of the *Majestic* (1839) Surgeon-Superintendent Peter Fisher.

⁷⁸ *Steadman’s Medical Dictionary*, p. 194.

⁷⁹ Lynchus: Catherine Bannister (122B) per *Sovereign* (1827); asthma: Elizabeth Murray (235M) per *Arab* (1836); scorbutus: Elizabeth Ellis (65E) per *Atwick* (1838); pleuritis: Elizabeth Ellis (65E) per *Atwick* (1838); pyrexia: Charlotte Chapman (271C) per *Hector* (1835); cephalagia: Ann White (358W) per *Majestic* (1839); seasickness: Catherine Shaw (92S) per *Midas* (1825).

⁸⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/74 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Westmoreland* (1836).

⁸¹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Sarah Wilkinson (95W) per *Persian* (1827), image 270.

⁸² John McDonald and Ralph Shlomowitz, ‘Mortality on Convict Voyages to Australia’, *Social Science History*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Autumn, 1989), p. 287.

was not considered contagious, but was thought to arise as a result of miasmas.⁸³ The first symptoms were severe pains, occasionally blood in the stools which were less profuse than with diarrhoea, and a severe bearing down sensation. Dysentery was said to cover a number of disorders marked by inflammation of the intestines, especially the colon.⁸⁴ Three fatal cases were recorded on the *Garland Grove* where according to William Bland they were ‘broken down in constitution from having led very irregular lives and all of them were pure vinegar drinkers’.⁸⁵ One victim had led a life of hard drinking and had declared herself to be ‘principally on the Town’.⁸⁶

Sarah Douglas, a prostitute, from York was diagnosed with dysentery as the *Nautilus* lay anchored at the Downs. Her shipmate Agnes Rutherford who walked the streets of Edinburgh also experienced symptoms of purging, pain, abdominal soreness, straining, griping, and thirst.⁸⁷ Mary Harris who was described as delicate, with ‘a spare habit of body’, attributed her pains to eating pea soup the previous day, but Surgeon-Superintendent Thomson diagnosed dysentery since it was rife on board the *Eliza*.⁸⁸ Three deaths resulted from the nine cases of dysentery recorded on the *Frances Charlotte*. Jane Prosser had been a prostitute in Somerset before her conviction, but she was one of the more robust patients who survived. In assessing the cases, John Osborne was quick to exonerate himself from any hint of neglect. He dismissed the medications as of little benefit, since he considered that nearly all who died of dysentery were debilitated with broken down constitutions from early dissipation.⁸⁹ Surgeon-Superintendent Evans extracted seventeen ounces of blood from Ann Goodier’s arm when he treated her for dysentery on board the *Lady of the Lake*.⁹⁰ She was then placed in a warm bath.⁹¹

⁸³ Bateson, *Convict Ships*, p. 271.

⁸⁴ *Vitalogy*, Ruddock (ed.), p. 14; *Stedman’s Medical Dictionary*, p. 475.

⁸⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Garland Grove* (1843).

⁸⁶ Bland claimed in his general remarks that she was ‘principally on the town’. PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Garland Grove* (1843).

⁸⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

⁸⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/23 Reel 3194, Journal of the *Eliza* (1830) Surgeon-Superintendent David Thomson.

⁸⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/28 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Frances Charlotte* (1833) Surgeon-Superintendent John Osborne.

⁹⁰ TAHO CON40/1/3, Ann Goodier (86G) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 253.

⁹¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of the Lake* (1829).

It is clear that constipation, diarrhoea, catarrh, and dysentery which were largely a consequence of shipboard life, were more likely to affect the women than any widespread epidemics. But the cholera epidemic of 1831-32 in the Southwark area of London ignited fear of the disease and prompted quick action on board the *Frances Charlotte*. John Osborne had joined the ship at the end of July 1832 and by early August it was evident that a carrier was on board. Ellen Butler was one of the more seriously afflicted patients. She had spent ten months on the town in Somerset when she boarded the *Frances Charlotte* at Woolwich. Ellen recovered but four of her shipmates and two of their children were not so resilient.⁹² Seventeen cases of cholera were recorded in the medical journal, eight of which proved fatal. But such shipboard outbreaks were rare in 1832 when Ellen sailed for Van Diemen's Land.

In 1798, Edward Jenner developed a widely accessible vaccine for smallpox, which by the 1830s was routinely administered to adults and children on board convict transports. Among the vaccinations administered to children on the ships bound for Van Diemen's Land, children of prostitutes were vaccinated on the *America*, *Garland Grove*, *Royal Admiral*, *Emma Eugenia* and *Woodbridge* while prostitutes were among the women who were vaccinated on the *Hope*, *Sir Charles Forbes* and the *Royal Admiral*. Prisoners had already boarded the *America* from Newgate Prison, when the surgeon-superintendent learned of an outbreak of smallpox at the gaol. Richard Lewis therefore made urgent inquiries to determine whether any on board were unvaccinated. Ellen Carter, a prostitute from Glasgow, required no treatment during the voyage but he vaccinated her six month old infant. Lewis described how the vesicle formed and passed through its stages in a regular and beautiful manner, so that a week later he 'armed' two tubes from the infant and transferred the lymph to another patient.⁹³ Lewis was following a procedure which was dictated in his instructions whereby the surgeon-superintendent was required to,

keep up such a succession of vaccinated cases as may enable
him to convey fresh virus to the colony, if the number of

⁹² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/28 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Frances Charlotte* (1833); TAHO CON40/1/1, Ellen Butler (251B) per *Frances Charlotte* (1833), image 190.

⁹³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831).

convicts or passengers on board, whom may not have had the small pox or been already vaccinated, will admit of it.⁹⁴

Everyone on board the *Hope* had been vaccinated or had previously survived smallpox. Richard Lewis was again the surgeon-superintendent on this voyage, and he sought volunteers merely for a trial to ascertain if the vaccine was sound. It was unsuccessful in the case of Celia Hart a prostitute from Sligo, when Lewis ‘prevailed upon this young woman, a very healthy subject to submit to a trial of the lymph sent on board’. When a second trial failed Lewis concluded: ‘I have great reason to believe that the lymph, which had been supplied had been collected so long before it was used that it had lost the power of communicating the disease.’⁹⁵

More deaths were due to disease than to accidents and violence on convict transports.⁹⁶ And while accidents were less frequently recorded than diseases, when they feature in the journals they offer a glimpse of the daily activities of women who were identified as prostitutes, and the level of responsibility afforded them. Many accidental injuries which women received on board could also have occurred in their pre-transportation workplace, since they involved domestic, and particularly kitchen duties. Other accidents such as falling down hatchways were perils of shipboard life.

Six women from this study were scalded during their time at sea. Ann Edwards the silk weaver from Spitalfields, was scalded both on the face and head by a kettle of boiling water.⁹⁷ Both Frances Mackinder and Agnes Carr were treated for scalds to their feet.⁹⁸ Agnes was only fifteen years old and had spent three months on the town before she was convicted of stealing gowns.⁹⁹ Phillis Lockyer sustained two long narrow burns on her left forearm when she fell onto the ribs of the galley grate, and Catherine Sinnet

⁹⁴ *British Parliamentary Papers. Report from the Select Committee on Transportation together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index. Crime and Punishment – Transportation 2* (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 346, Appendix no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent of Convict Ships.

⁹⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/35 Reel 3198, Journal of the *Hope* (1842) Surgeon-Superintendent Richard Lewis.

⁹⁶ McDonald and Shlomowitz, ‘Mortality on convict ships’, p. 287.

⁹⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/62 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Providence* (1826) Surgeon-Superintendent Matthew Burnside; TAHO CON40/1/3, Ann Edwards (21E) per *Providence* (1826), image 121.

⁹⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/46 Reel 3202, Journal of the *Majestic* (1839); PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/74 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Westmoreland* (1836); TAHO CON40/1/8, Frances Mackinder (249M) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 9.

⁹⁹ TAHO CON40/1/2, Agnes Carr (366C) per *Majestic* (1839), image 178.

who was wounded on her scalp, also sustained a burn to her right elbow.¹⁰⁰ It is unclear what Sarah Bradon's role was but she was injured while the butcher was cutting meat on board the *Harmony*.¹⁰¹

Bruising was frequently recorded, but again not always explained. Both Elizabeth Ellerbeck and Rachael Chamberlain on the *Mary Anne* received contusions, Chamberlain's on her forehead, and Ellerbeck's on her left side and shoulder. James Hall felt little compassion for Chamberlain upon whom he bestowed the following tirade: 'a most infamous character, a confirmed thief and vile prostitute, a sly woman, hypocrite, blasphemer, drunkard, revengeful, reprobate, refractory, insolent'.¹⁰² Elizabeth Ellerbeck he described as, a reprobate, and a hypocrite who had committed prostitution on board and been punished.¹⁰³ James Gilchrist was equally unsympathetic towards Mary Lang when she fell down a hatchway while being restrained.¹⁰⁴ He considered her to be a most violent and ungovernable prisoner. Her gaoler identified her as a prostitute when she was charged with stealing nineteen sovereigns, fourteen shillings, two Spanish dollars and two quarter dollars from a sailor.¹⁰⁵

Some women fell through open hatchways or had difficulty negotiating the steep ladders. Mary Ann Dowell fractured her fibula when the roll of the *Atwick* hurled her into the aft hold.¹⁰⁶ Mary Ann was born in New York so this was not her first sea voyage. Frances Shepherd's advanced pregnancy may have caused her to slip on the ladder of the water closet on board the same ship.¹⁰⁷ Rough seas were probably responsible for the high number of similar accidents on board the *Sovereign* where Elizabeth Taylor fell down the ladder of the after hatchway on the quarter deck, and Rebecca Peaviott laid open her scalp when she slipped on the ladder of the fore hatch.

¹⁰⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/46 Reel 3202 Journal of the *Majestic* (1839); TAHO CON 40/1/6, Phillis Lockyer (186L) per *Majestic* (1839) image 218; PRO (AJCP) Adm.101/35 Reel 3198, Journal of the *Hope* (1842); TAHO CON19/1/3, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Hope*); TAHO CON40/1/3, Catherine Sinnett (514S) per *Hope* (1842), image 76.

¹⁰¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/32 Reel 3197, Journal of the *Harmony* (1829) Surgeon-Superintendent William Clifford; ML TP 24 CY1276, Indent for the *Harmony*.

¹⁰² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822).

¹⁰³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822).

¹⁰⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/53 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mermaid* (1828).

¹⁰⁵ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Lang (67L) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 314.

¹⁰⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838) Surgeon-Superintendent Peter Leonard.

¹⁰⁷ TAHO CON40/1/10, Frances Shepherd (366S) per *Atwick* (1838), image 17; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

Elizabeth Vick suffered only bruising when she fell down the *Sovereign's* main hatchway after which Robert Malcolm considered her complaints to be over-exaggerated.¹⁰⁸

To cope with unexpected events surgeons-superintendent were adept at many medical procedures such as setting a broken limb.¹⁰⁹ Peter Leonard on the *Atwick* performed the task as did Robert Malcolm on the *Sovereign* who described how he 'brought the edges of the bone into apposition and placed the limb on the south inclined plane so strongly recommended by Mr. Chas. Bell for fractures of the thigh bone.'¹¹⁰ When Rebecca Peaviott injured her scalp Robert Malcolm removed the hair, brought the edges of the wound together and successfully held it with adhesive plaster.¹¹¹ Surgical operations were avoided if possible since according to Brand and Staniforth nineteenth-century surgeons knew that death was a likely outcome.¹¹² Surgery was therefore a last resort.

Occasionally the journals reveal rifts in that benign relationship of co-operation which generally prevailed between the surgeon-superintendent and his charges. The notes which accompanied Sarah Fletcher's treatment for pleuritis expressed the frustration of a surgeon-superintendent when dealing with a non-compliant prisoner. Sarah so incensed James Hall that he described her as 'a dangerous woman to man. Under a fair face and simplicity of manners lie a lustful heart, a lying tongue and great hypocrisy in religion, prostitute, an infamous feigner of illness.'¹¹³ This tirade was occasioned when, 'She had a case of Pleuritis which ... induced a train of nervous symptoms which the patient artfully employed and made subsequent to her lustful and wicked designs.'¹¹⁴ Sarah's symptoms had initially perplexed Hall, until he discovered that she was attempting to compromise his 'professional and moral character'.

Jonathan Stewart treated an equally puzzling case on the *Nautilus*.¹¹⁵ Maria Smith was a widow who had lived with a surgeon at Greenwich for three years. Stewart labelled her

¹⁰⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

¹⁰⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹¹⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

¹¹¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

¹¹² Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', pp. 24-25.

¹¹³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822); TAHO CON40/1/3 Sarah Fletcher per *Mary Anne* (1822), image 153.

¹¹⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822).

¹¹⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

as both a prostitute and a kept woman.¹¹⁶ Maria was convicted of stealing seventeen month old, Ann Jones, the daughter of Henry Jones a printer from Blackheath.¹¹⁷ Maria's case notes began at Woolwich where she was described as being seven or eight months pregnant and becoming very stout. Three months later Stewart revised his entry to say that she was received on board under the impression that she had been pregnant and to be confined sometime in May. She exhibited symptoms of early labour, but after experiencing a watery discharge for two days, both the pains and her abdomen subsided. Whilst her health improved, the discharge reappeared in fits and starts. Although her abdomen was still swollen when they arrived in Hobart Town, Maria asked to be assigned as a needlewoman.¹¹⁸ Whatever had affected her it was not life threatening for within three years of arriving she was married and five years later she baptised her son Samuel.¹¹⁹

*So many peculiarities as is connected with the uterine system*¹²⁰

The medical journals were executed mostly by men of competence and compassion who in spite of the wide social and cultural divisions inherent in the doctor-patient relationship were genuinely committed to their task.¹²¹ Many were naval surgeons and while their qualifications and experience were immense, that did not always extend to the treatment of women and children.¹²² Some, such as Richard Lewis, David Thomson and James Hall, gained knowledge during multiple voyages in charge of female prisoners.

¹¹⁶ TAHO CON40/1/10, Maria Smith (347S) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 20.

¹¹⁷ *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913* online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/images.jsp?doc=183710230211>, 23 October 1837, p. 1011 (23 June 2012).

¹¹⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹¹⁹ TAHO RGD37/1/2, Register-General's Department, Marriage Register (965), Maria Smith to Jonathan Howarth (1841); TAHO RGD32/3, Register-General's Department, Register of Baptisms (2906), Samuel Howarth, 1846, Hobart.

¹²⁰ See particularly PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831) Surgeon-Superintendent Samuel Sinclair.

¹²¹ For a discussion on the divide between middle-class morality and working-class culture see Michael Sturma, 'Eye of the Beholder: The Stereotype of Women Convicts 1788-1852', *Labour History*, no. 34 (May, 1978).

¹²² For a discussion on the qualifications of surgeons-superintendent see Brand and Staniforth, 'Care and Control', pp. 26-27.

Yet Hall confessed that,

I observed many complicated ailments among the women and was often perplexed in endeavouring to give them a name, and more so in devising a rational principle of cure. Oftentimes I have been alarmed by symptoms which seemed to denote danger to life: and they were not simple fits of Hysteria, but commotions in the nervous system originating in a reciprocal action, as it seemed, of the uterine system and mind, from ideal or mechanical causes.¹²³

This confusion coincided with a fascination with female physiology. Ann Wood claimed that nineteenth-century doctors directed their attention to the womb in a way that seems obsessive to a modern observer, as they concentrated on every conceivable type of menstrual and uterine disorder.¹²⁴ Wood suggested that the medical analysis of a woman began and ended with consideration of an organ unique to her, namely her uterus.¹²⁵ This pre-occupation is apparent in the medical journals of the surgeons-superintendent who accompanied female convicts to Van Diemen's Land. As well as discussions on their bowels, woman's uterine health received considerable attention. Samuel Sinclair observed,

so many peculiarities as is connected with the uterine system, extreme sensibility & mobility of the nervous - with greater irritability of fibre (especially in warm climates -) rendering them more apt to suffer than males or the more robust of their own sex.¹²⁶

The illness 'paramenia obstructionis' frequently appeared in the sick lists and was a handy 'catch all' to explain any disorder of menstruation while simultaneously linking to an assortment of afflictions. Sarah Barnes had her symptoms of 'paramenia obstructionis' recorded thus,

affected with erythematic inflammation of the foot - she has her monthly illness three days before during the continuance of which she received a chill, and the foot became inflamed

¹²³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822).

¹²⁴ Ann Douglas Wood, "'The Fashionable Diseases', Women's Complaints and Their Treatment in Nineteenth-Century America', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 4, no. 1 (Summer, 1973), pp. 28-29.

¹²⁵ Wood, 'Fashionable Diseases', p.28.

¹²⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831) (emphasis original).

immediately afterward 16 ozs of blood was taken from the arm.¹²⁷

It is unlikely that Sarah had ever received such a high level of individual medical care as that provided by Surgeon-Superintendent Richard Lewis.¹²⁸ She was born in Bedford then moved to Cambridge where she spent three and a half years on the town. At some stage she had been an inmate of the Spinning House, the local Workhouse in St Andrew's Street, for she confessed as much when she arrived in Hobart Town in 1831. The Spinning House served as a workhouse for the poor and a place of confinement for 'lewd women from houses of ill fame'.¹²⁹ When Sarah was admitted it was classed as a 'receptacle for profligate and disorderly women.'¹³⁰

Lewis made the same diagnosis of 'paramenia obstructionis' for prostitutes Margaret Shaw, Esther Lynes, Lydia Foxley, Mary Ann Boden, Jane Beavens and Eliza Whare. He took twelve ounces of blood from Eliza, and two months later repeated his diagnosis of 'paramenia obstructionis' and also observed inflammation of the ligaments surrounding Eliza's ankle joint. He again removed twelve ounces of blood while noting that, 'She attributes this affection to suppressed menstruation'. When the same occurred at her next monthly period he recorded that, 'I enquired if there had been any late disease occasioning purulent discharge from the genitals, but could not find that there had been.'¹³¹ Lewis knew Eliza's background and possibly suspected the presence of venereal disease. Eliza had spent four years on the town in York before being found guilty of picking pockets. Her gaoler described her as a prostitute who had frequently been tried for theft. For a third month Surgeon-Superintendent Lewis removed twelve ounces of blood from Eliza's long suffering body, at the same time employing mercury, ipecac purgatives, emetics and fomentations.

The manner in which surgeons-superintendent treated menstrual disorders supports Showalter and Showalter's belief that, 'The Victorians' ideas about menstruation

¹²⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831).

¹²⁸ TAHO CON40/1/1, Sarah Barnes (186B) per *America* (1831), image 157.

¹²⁹ <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Cambridge/> (4 April 2011).

¹³⁰ During its two hundred years of operation the Spinning House where Sarah Barnes was held, served as a workhouse for the poor, but during the seventeenth century it was also noted as a place of confinement for lewd women from houses of ill-fame. This dual purpose seemed ongoing as in the nineteenth century it was described as, 'a receptacle for profligate and disorderly women.'

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Cambridge/> (4 April 2011).

¹³¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831).

furnish a remarkable example of the way in which scientific knowledge reflects, rather than determines, the moral biases of an era.’¹³² Amenorrhea or suppressed menstruation was another frequent diagnosis. James Hall observed that,

very few females menstruate regularly and I learned that the uterine secretion generally ceases while the female convicts lie in Newgate and in other jails hence from the suppression of this periodical secretion arise many disturbances in the female system.¹³³

Similar findings were recorded on the *Nautilus* where, ‘Periodic functions of the uterus are suspended in at least one third of the female prisoners’.¹³⁴ When Jane Peadon, was diagnosed with amenorrhea Surgeon-Superintendent Mackey noted that she experienced severe pain in the loins and lower part of her belly and the discharge of small portions of lymph from the vagina and very scanty menses. She was admitted to the hospital and placed in a hip bath, after which warm fomentations were applied to her abdomen. This resulted in a copious discharge of blood from the vagina, strong bearing down pains, and violent spasms of the uterus. As Jane began to recover Dr Mackey reported that she was soon able to stay on deck for several hours at a time.¹³⁵

Menorrhagia or excessive menstruation was the converse condition and although Priscilla Ray was never identified as a prostitute, when being treated for menorrhagia her doctor observed that, ‘this woman I should premise led a most profligate course of life, from the age of puberty and the laxity and debility of the sexual organs arising from such habits had become confirmed’.¹³⁶ Dr Dewess, a much quoted authority on female ailments, described menorrhagia as an immoderate discharge of fluid blood from the uterus, but he was uncertain whether it was from the same source as the periodic

¹³² Elaine Showalter and English Showalter, ‘Victorian Women and Menstruation’, *Victorian Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (September, 1970), p. 88.

¹³³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822).

¹³⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

¹³⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/73 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Waverley* (1842) Surgeon-Superintendent Samuel Mackey.

¹³⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of Lake* (1829) .

blood.¹³⁷ Women were treated for menorrhagia on the *Majestic*, *Nautilus*, and *Navarino*.¹³⁸

Leucorrhoea or uterine discharge troubled Bridget Bateman on board the *America*.¹³⁹ Her husband William had been transported to Sydney two years earlier but she had only spent five months on the town prior to her conviction. A tattoo on her arm WB I BB bore witness to her lasting affection for her husband, and since she was accompanied by her two children, she may have committed the crime to follow him.¹⁴⁰ Dr Dixon believed that leucorrhoea was caused by general exhaustion of the system and followed violent emotions such as anger, grief and fear.¹⁴¹ Conversely his contemporary Dr Columbat blamed its presence on behaviours such as idleness, effeminacy, a sedentary life, the constant contact of the two sexes, frequenting places where everything inspires pleasure, prolonged watching, excessive dancing, frivolous occupations, and a study of the arts which could prompt an overactive imagination.¹⁴² It seems likely that Bridget's condition would have been more compatible with Dr Dixon's theory than Dr Columbat's.

When Maria Rivers complained of pain and fullness in her abdomen, she was treated with an 'ammoniacal injection ... Viz Ten drops of the Liq. Ammon. in an ounce and a half of tepid water to be injected into the vagina three times a day, and a laxative enema to be given when necessary.'¹⁴³ The injections continued until 'it produced so great a heat and irritation in the vagina and about the neck of the womb that I was obliged to discontinue it.'¹⁴⁴ Such treatments were frequently prescribed for a variety of symptoms in the nineteenth century so surgeons-superintendent on board female convict ships were following accepted medical practice. Water, milk, linseed tea and decoctions of marshmallow were some of the substances which 'found their way inside nervous women patients.'¹⁴⁵ Ann Wood considered such techniques to be indicative of the

¹³⁷ Dewees, *Treatise*, p. 150.

¹³⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/46 Reel 3202, Journal of the *Majestic* (1839); PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838); PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Navarino* (1841).

¹³⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831).

¹⁴⁰ TAHO CON19/1/12, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*America*).

¹⁴¹ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 112.

¹⁴² Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 115.

¹⁴³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

¹⁴⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

¹⁴⁵ Wood, 'Fashionable Diseases', p. 30.

cultural biases and assumptions of the era, rather than milestones marking a developing science.¹⁴⁶ She could partially excuse the ignorance of the medical profession, but not the methods of treatment.

Dr Dixon confessed that although phlebotomy was a sadly abused remedy for many female complaints, it was undoubtedly serviceable in the treatment of some menstrual disorders.¹⁴⁷ He believed that a sanguine temperament suppressed menstruation so bleeding was beneficial as it often equalised the circulation. In cases of inflammation of the uterus, Dr Dewees suggested that bleeding should be done a second or third time. 'Blood-letting must be employed to the full extent the system will well bear ... its quantity must ever be of minor consideration, so long as the symptoms continue to demand its repetition.'¹⁴⁸ Dewees recommended bleeding, first by the arm, then when the pulse was down, leeches be applied over the parts nearest to the uterus and also to the vulva in such numbers as to abstract at least eight or ten ounces of blood. Bleeding was then to be encouraged by applying moist warmth and repeated until the condition improved.¹⁴⁹

Elizabeth Drayman experienced spasmodic pains in her abdomen which flannels and a warm purgative appeared to ease.¹⁵⁰ When the sharp pains returned in her spine she was successfully blistered then bled to relieve the pain.¹⁵¹ Surgeon-Superintendent Malcolm repeatedly blistered her shipmate Maria Rivers, who suffered from head and uterine pain. When a burning pain gripped Sarah Bennett's abdomen, a blister was applied to the seat of pain but 'the blister did not vesicate as much as could be wished and it was suffered to remain on the part affected the whole day, without much advantage.'¹⁵²

The ignorance which surrounded many disorders of the uterine system caused some surgeons-superintendent to seek explanations in the women's past behaviour and habits. By association the female criminal possessed lax morality and a sexual appetite which

¹⁴⁶ Wood, 'Fashionable Diseases', p. 33.

¹⁴⁷ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 62-63.

¹⁴⁸ Dewees, *Treatise*, p.342.

¹⁴⁹ Dewees, *Treatise*, p.243.

¹⁵⁰ TAHO CON40/1/3, Elizabeth Drayman (78D) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 45.

¹⁵¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

¹⁵² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831); TAHO CON40/1/1, Sarah Bennett (194B) per *America* (1831), image 161.

led to both early and excessive indulgence in the sexual act.¹⁵³ Such opinion was frequently expressed in the case notes of individual women, and the general comments offered on the voyage. Priscilla Ray was subject to the same suspicion of sexual excesses which informed many medical diagnoses.¹⁵⁴ Surgeon-Superintendent John Mould sought reasons for many illnesses on board the *Margaret* and suggested an excess of moisture in the air, the change of climate, and the lack of exercise due to the confined space on board the ship. But he possessed that same nagging suspicion that some illnesses were due ‘wholly or in part, to former sexual excesses.’¹⁵⁵

Although Rosina Winter was not identified as a prostitute nor was she treated for venereal disease, when she presented with scrofula Edward Caldwell noted that she ‘has led an irregular coarse of life and having within the last 3 years (by her own account) taken a great quantity of Mercury [she] says she never was afflicted with syphilis though I think the contrary.’¹⁵⁶ Nor was Mary Healy known to be a prostitute but Caldwell explained that she had ‘led the life of a vagrant in travelling the country had suffered from syphilis fever and Diarrhoea’.¹⁵⁷ When William Evans treated Janet Torrens for syphilis he noted that,

This woman has led a most profligate coarse life, having been a common street walker for several years and from her own history had been repeatedly diseased. Indeed on examination the vaginal gland appear to have suffered much as [has the] Labia Pudenda.¹⁵⁸

It was not only excessive sexual activity which was seen to impact upon women’s health. Even the more compassionate surgeons-superintendent blamed some women’s debility on their choice of lifestyle. The relationship between debility and lifestyle is valid, but nineteenth-century diagnoses made few allowances for environmental factors over which the patient had no control. Poor nutrition, inadequate housing, industrial

¹⁵³ For discussion on perceptions of working-class female sexuality see Marybeth Hamilton Arnold, ‘Life of a Citizen in the Hands of a Woman’, in Kathy Peiss and Christiana Simmons (eds.), with Robert A. Padgag, *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Philadelphia, 1989), p. 40; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York 1789-1860* (New York, 1986), pp. 20-25.

¹⁵⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of Lake* (1829).

¹⁵⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/48 Reel 3203, Journal of the *Margaret* (1843).

¹⁵⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843) Surgeon-Superintendent Edward Caldwell.

¹⁵⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843).

¹⁵⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/41 Reel 3200, Journal of the *Lady of Lake* (1829).

pollution and exposure to infectious diseases were the realities of life for many women who turned to prostitution as indeed it was for a large number of impoverished urban women. On board the *Atwick*, Peter Leonard singled out for attention, ‘some whose Persons were in a most filthy condition; and thus whose strength had been seemingly impaired by dissipation and previous Disease.’¹⁵⁹ He considered that one patient had intemperate habits and an irregular mode of life, and therefore suffered from those ‘irregularities’. After repeated attacks of intermittent fever Leonard concluded that his patient had ultimately fallen victim to that species of apoplexy which was dependent upon nervous and vascular debility, and which occurred in individuals whose constitutions had been weakened by intemperance.¹⁶⁰ Catherine Murray was ‘addicted to the Vice of her use of ardent spirits and tobacco’, which accounted for her poor health.¹⁶¹ Samuel Sinclair highlighted that susceptibility when he reviewed the fatalities on the *Mary*. He blamed the victims’

relaxed, debilitated and indolent habits ... to all of which may be added their former Vitiated and dissipated habits of life. Some of them had been confirmed drunkards &c, in a great proportion of them, conspiring also to debilitate and predispose the system to the General exciting causes of disease.¹⁶²

An accepted link between genitourinary disorders and hysteria was evident in the observations made by surgeons-superintendent. The word ‘hysteria’ is derived from the Greek word ‘womb’ which was thought to be the source of this multifarious condition.¹⁶³ Three women on the *Eliza* were diagnosed with severe hysteria and in two cases it was followed by complete mania requiring restraint.¹⁶⁴ Dr Edward Dixon believed that hysteria could pass into mania or epilepsy and syncope.¹⁶⁵ And indeed the symptoms described by surgeons-superintendent frequently resembled those of an epileptic fit.

¹⁵⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹⁶⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

¹⁶¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843).

¹⁶² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

¹⁶³ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 131.

¹⁶⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/23 Reel 3194, Journal of the *Eliza* (1830).

¹⁶⁵ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 141.

Mary Ann Drane was treated for hysteria at which time Samuel Sinclair noted that she had irregular habits, a violent temper and passions addicted to intoxication.¹⁶⁶ Experience had shown him that such irregularities frequently subjected the patient to hysteria and the most violent convulsions. Mary Ann suffered frequent paroxysms at which time five or six men were required to restrain her to prevent her self-harming. She was twenty nine years old and claimed to have spent fourteen years on the town. She had been gaoled for vagrancy six times, but she was able to read and write. Whether she learnt as a child before embarking on her itinerate life, or whether she learnt on the voyage is unknown. Mary Ann's first year within the colony was marked by successive assignments and punishment until she was returned to the Female House of Correction to be examined by the doctors. They concurred with Surgeon-Superintendent Sinclair that she was not of sound mind. Mary Ann lived till the age of sixty seven when she died at the New Norfolk Hospital for the Insane.¹⁶⁷ Six other women on the *Mary* were treated for hysteria and Dr Sinclair not only repeated his colleagues' belief that tropical heat and an excessively wide range of atmospheric temperatures contributed to its prevalence, but he also reiterated that it was 'not infrequently connected intimately with the uterine system.'¹⁶⁸

Greater numbers of women were placed on the sick list as ships entered warmer latitudes, and intensely high temperatures were considered to be particularly dangerous. David Thomson blamed those precise conditions for the 'mental derangement' of his patients on the *Eliza*. They suffered intense headaches and acute febrile symptoms which were relieved within a few days by bleeding and purgatives. Margaret Thompson was placed in a 'strait waistcoat' during the night or whenever she became violent. Her head was shaved and frequently washed with cold vinegar and water.¹⁶⁹ But the treatments failed to save her life. Her records are not sufficiently comprehensive to

¹⁶⁶ TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary Ann Drane (128D) per *Mary* (1831), image 70; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

¹⁶⁷ TAHO CON52/1/1, Index to Convict Applications for Permission to Marry 1829-1857, Mary Ann Drane (free) and James Spicer per *David Lyon* (1838); TAHO RGD37/1/1, Register-General's Department, Marriage Register (107), Mary Ann Drane to James Spicer, 1838, Richmond; TAHO RGD35/1/40, Register-General's Department, Register of Deaths (342), Mary Ann Spicer, 1871, New Norfolk. Mary Ann died of bronchitis at the Hospital for the Insane and was listed as a pauper.

¹⁶⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

¹⁶⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/23 Reel 3194, Journal of the *Eliza* (1830).

know whether she was identified as a prostitute but the circumstances of her arrest would indicate that she was.¹⁷⁰

Richard Lewis on the *Hope* also observed that ‘disturbance of the functions of the uterus, occasioned several forms of Hysteria.’¹⁷¹ He believed that Ellen Lovett’s hysteria resulted from suppression of the menses. It was accompanied by severe pain in her left side, short respiration, and pain in the temples.¹⁷² Ellen was a twenty four year old from Cavan who had spent five years on the town.¹⁷³ It was not only suppressed menstruation which was thought to cause hysteria, for it also accompanied difficult and painful menstruation.

When a surgeon-superintendent diagnosed hysteria he was reflecting contemporary medical thinking.¹⁷⁴ Edward Dixon explained that hysteria could begin with fits of laughing, crying, oppression of the stomach, cold chills, cold hands or feet, violent headaches, convulsive aspirations, heaving of the chest, and application of hand to throat with constant throwing back of the head and body. Dixon concluded that ‘Hysteria is undoubtedly mostly due to an indolent, luxurious and enervating mode of life.’¹⁷⁵ It is doubtful whether such causes initiated Mary Williams’ attacks. She was a nineteen year old house maid from Liverpool who was described by Surgeon-Superintendent Patton as ‘a low character’ who had been subject to fits. Patton diagnosed hysteria, and noted that she had already suffered two or three attacks whilst on board. After employing his much favoured method of treatment he observed that, ‘bleeding has been of essential service to her’.¹⁷⁶

The highly influential French physician Dr Columbat warned that whatever the causes of hysteria, sufferers generally possessed an excitable temperament and the qualities of

¹⁷⁰ TAHO CON40/1/9, Margaret Thompson (62T) per *Eliza* (1830), image 181. Guilty of robbing a man at night time after he gave her sixpence and asked her to go into a lane with him, *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London’s Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913*, online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18290611-346-verdict1817&div=t18290611-346#highlight>, 11 June 1829, p. 153 (23 June 2012).

¹⁷¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/35 Reel 3198, Journal of the *Hope* (1842).

¹⁷² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/35 Reel 3198, Journal of the *Hope* (1842).

¹⁷³ TAHO CON40/1/6, Ellen Lovett (254L) per *Hope* (1842), image 241. See chapter 8 for further examination of Ellen Lovett’s colonial life.

¹⁷⁴ That of Edward Dixon for example.

¹⁷⁵ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p.142.

¹⁷⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

levity, frivolity, remarkable obstinacy, capriciousness and irascibility.¹⁷⁷ But Edward Dixon also believed that hysteria could be present when a woman had a drunken and unkind husband, or a thankless child.¹⁷⁸ In his discourse Dixon demonstrated features of the evolving medical profession which were also present in the surgeons' journals. Their authority included licence to pontificate on matters social, medical, ethical and spiritual. As Lynda Nead pointed out, doctors made pronouncements on a range of social and moral issues on which they had no particular expertise.¹⁷⁹

Table 5.5: Cases of 'hysteria' noted in the surgeons' journals

Ship	Year	No. women	Prostitute	% prostitute	Non- prostitute	% non- prostitute
<i>America</i>	1831	5	1	1.4	4	3.4
<i>Mary</i>	1831	5	2	5.9	3	2.6
<i>Atwick Gilbert</i>	1838	3	2	4.7	1	0.9
<i>Henderson</i>	1840	4	1	2	3	2.3
<i>Hope</i>	1842	7	3	4.4	4	5.2
<i>Margaret</i>	1843	1	0	0	1	0.9
<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	2	1	1.6	1	1.4

Source: PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101 (22 ships)

Examining journals from twenty two ships it is apparent that not all surgeons-superintendent diagnosed hysteria. Fifteen ships had no record of the condition which could mean that no women displayed symptoms. Its absence could alternatively be blamed on the vagaries of the official records, or the training and diagnostic practices of the surgeon. While the nosological table provided clear categories for the identification of illnesses, any diagnosis still depended on the skill of the surgeon-superintendent, his level of attention to his patients, the amount of care taken with his journal entries, and whether or not he even recognised the existence of a condition called hysteria. The *Nautilus* which has a long and detailed sick list had no cases of hysteria listed. Jonathan Roberts however, recorded seven cases among the female prisoners on the *Hope*. Five each were noted on the *Mary* and the *America*. Sir John Hamett treated four women on the *Gilbert Henderson*, where Margaret Price was four times listed as suffering from

¹⁷⁷ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 142, quoting Dr Columbat.

¹⁷⁸ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 135.

¹⁷⁹ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, p. 143.

hysteria and Mary Ann Warren's attack was described as 'severe'.¹⁸⁰ Neither was identified as a prostitute and although total numbers are not high there is no clear indication that prostitutes were more prone to hysteria.¹⁸¹ While the overall percentage of cases would appear to favour women identified as prostitutes, they were more heavily represented on only three of the seven voyages. When looking at the age of women diagnosed with hysteria, the mean for prostitutes was 23.78 years which is higher than that of the general population of prostitutes. For non-prostitutes it was 26.68 years. No women were diagnosed with both venereal disease and hysteria.

If surgeons-superintendent were influenced by the theories of George Drysdale, they may have dismissed the possibility that women identified as prostitutes could suffer from hysteria. Drysdale asserted that sexual shyness and timidity were characteristics of the women whom he treated for hysteria. He believed that the complaint was connected with the female sexual system and that in almost all cases, 'some deep-rooted *sexual* morbidity [caused] the disordered mental state.'¹⁸² It was most severe in single women, those unhappily married or the childless, and 'Doubtless in many hysterical cases masturbation is practised, and serves to increase the nervous weakness, and the morbid state of the sexual feelings.'¹⁸³ Dr Dixon also associated the uterus with the disease but considered the brain and nervous system to be the most powerful manifestations of the condition.¹⁸⁴ He recognised that an attack could be preceded by a series of depressing and melancholy associations rather than as some [like Drysdale] suggested, 'the most repulsive acts.'¹⁸⁵ In Dixon's opinion, such acts were 'departures from moral purity'.¹⁸⁶

Not only are treatments for women's menstrual and sexual disorders now seen as indicative of cultural attitudes towards women, but the treatment of women's nervous condition also reveals much about nineteenth-century medical theory.¹⁸⁷ Dr Dewess wrote that, 'Perhaps there is scarcely a disease which demands such extensive bleeding

¹⁸⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/29 Reel 3196, Journal of the *Gilbert Henderson* (1840).

¹⁸¹ Table 5.5: Cases of 'hysteria' noted in surgeons' journals.

¹⁸² Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, p. 176.

¹⁸³ Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, p. 177.

¹⁸⁴ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 132.

¹⁸⁵ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 134.

¹⁸⁶ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 134.

¹⁸⁷ Wood, 'Fashionable Diseases', p. 25.

as the simple hysteritis.’¹⁸⁸ Dr Dixon also recommended bleeding in patients when hysteria had resulted from suppression of the menses.¹⁸⁹ When the cause was traced to the bowels, castor oil was prescribed to remove any obstructions in that region. Emetics were particularly favoured when indigestible substances sat in the stomach and prompted a fit of hysteria.¹⁹⁰ Assafoetida in a watery infusion was a popular treatment.¹⁹¹ In the mid nineteenth century assafoetida was cultivated in the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens so its properties would have been familiar to the many Scottish surgeons who accompanied ships to Van Diemen's Land.¹⁹² Anti-spasmodic remedies such as opium, camphor and valerian were also widely employed.¹⁹³ Dixon suggested that some women could be successfully treated through the simple ploy of ridiculing the cause of her mental anxiety as long as it was done with sympathy and care.¹⁹⁴ He cautioned his students that much valuable professional time could be wasted as the doctor became ‘a slave to an hysterical patient.’¹⁹⁵

It was not till 1854, the year after transportation to Van Diemen's Land ceased, that Dr Dewess published his findings and asserted that ‘The seat of hysteria would seem to be in the brain itself, instead of the uterus.’¹⁹⁶ Prior to that Edward Dixon had suggested that the brain and nervous system were also powerful sources of hysteria.¹⁹⁷ Unlike the surgeons-superintendent who blamed a life of dissipation and intemperance for the condition of their prisoner patients, Dixon treated a very different population. He attended wealthy middle-class paying patients, lectured to a new generation of physicians, and published on the subject. He dedicated a chapter to hysteria, and was persuaded that, ‘the adult female can, by mental discipline and observation of her own

¹⁸⁸ Dewees, *Treatise*, p. 343. He refuted the opinion which held that the uterus was the source of such a large number of women's medical problems, pp. 21-24.

¹⁸⁹ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 140.

¹⁹⁰ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 140.

¹⁹¹ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 144.

¹⁹² M. Grieve, *A Modern Herbal: The Medicinal, Culinary, Cosmetic and Economic Properties, Cultivation and Folklore of Herbs, Grasses, Fungi, Shrubs and Trees with All Their Modern Scientific Uses* (Middlesex, 1976 [1931]), p. 62.

¹⁹³ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 140.

¹⁹⁴ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 139.

¹⁹⁵ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 143.

¹⁹⁶ Dewees, *Treatise*, p. 463.

¹⁹⁷ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 132.

bodily peculiarities, do far more to prevent an attack, than a physician can possibly do for its relief.’¹⁹⁸

Cases of mental illness, suicide, and extreme depression are to be found in the surgeons’ journals. And as with their more celebrated colleagues, surgeons-superintendent were sensitive to what we now describe as psychosomatic illnesses which were occasioned by the immense fear and ignorance of what lay ahead. Robert Malcolm was aware of the effects which a woman’s mental state could have on her physical well-being, but he also showed confidence in human adaptability when he observed that

Whatever may have been their previous sufferings, it is not till the distressful moment of final separation from the land of their fathers, from the home of their infancy that they awaken to a full consciousness of their wretchedness. In their miserable condition neither memory nor forecast can afford them any comfort ... In such a state it might reasonably be expected that all the depressing passions would possess their full influence in predisposing to disease, but both the human mind and the human body accommodate themselves with extraordinary promptness.¹⁹⁹

Samuel Sinclair recognised potential dangers from the combined effects of

the delicacy and peculiarities of the female constitution [and] the confinement and state of privation inseparable from so long a residence in a Ship [and] the peculiarities of their situation, the minds of most of them (with few exceptions) [are] labouring under the influence of depression.²⁰⁰

But fear of the unknown and separation from home were not the only sources of mental anguish. Thirty one women and their children died on the *East London*.²⁰¹ Even with the high mortality rate and shorter life expectancy of Irish women during the 1840s, survivors could not have remained unaffected as increasing numbers of bodies were despatched into the terrifying ocean.²⁰² A further fourteen women and an unknown

¹⁹⁸ Dixon, *Woman and her Diseases*, p. 132.

¹⁹⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

²⁰⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831). (Emphasis in the original)

²⁰¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843).

²⁰² For recent work on the psychological impact of transportation on women see Stephen Lucas, ‘Female Convicts in Van Diemen’s Land – Fertile grounds for the development of post traumatic stress disorder’, Female Factory Research Group Seminar, November 2012: <http://www.femaleconvicts.org.au/> (11 January 2013).

number of children were hospitalized on arrival in Hobart Town and at least two women died in the New Norfolk Asylum for the Insane.²⁰³

The desire to clear British gaols and parishes of their troublesome inmates and dependants saw women who may have been clinically insane swept up and onto transports. These women did not qualify as sufferers of hysteria like their shipmates. Instead surgeons-superintendent believed that their causes were much more deep seated. Sarah Parfitt who remained on the *Rajah* in spite of attempts to remove her, was declared to be ‘perfectly harmless and always quiet except when the ship was in the variable winds near the Equator when she showed symptoms of violence.’²⁰⁴ By the 1840s surgeons-superintendent had observed a link between the cases of insanity and the regime of the silent system which operated at the Millbank Penitentiary in London. While James Donovan considered ten women to be mentally unfit for the journey, four others were ‘weak in their intellect’, but remained on board since they were quiet and easily managed. They gave little trouble except when the *Rajah* was becalmed near the equator and like Sarah Parfitt they became violent.²⁰⁵ Donovan noted that all cases of derangement were among women who had been brought from the General Penitentiary and subjected to the silent system.²⁰⁶

No cases of mental illness were diagnosed among the women identified as prostitutes. Only two women so identified were treated for conditions which resembled mental illness. One was Ann Wilson whose symptoms puzzled Surgeon-Superintendent Stewart. She usually sat alone with her back to the other women, appearing to be listless, and obviously unhappy. Mr Stewart described her as being ‘mechanically occupied in some matter which leads to no useful purpose.’²⁰⁷ Towards her messmates he thought her singularly taciturn, and he asked himself, ‘Is she becoming insane?’ He finally concluded that there was no obvious disturbance, except a most infirm temper. Another prostitute Elizabeth Rowley was described as being gloomy and despondent, but since she had been sick for three months before embarking, her gloom was not

²⁰³ TAHO CON40/1/8, Mary McMahon (467M) per *East London* (1843), image 82; TAHO CON40/1/8 Catherine Murray (468M) per *East London* (1843), image 82.

²⁰⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/64 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1841) Surgeon-Superintendent James Donovan.

²⁰⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/64 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1841).

²⁰⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/64 Reel 3208, Journal of the *Rajah* (1841).

²⁰⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3205, Journal of the *Nautilus* (1838).

surprising.²⁰⁸ Such a low incidence of mental illness would have surprised George Drysdale who believed that ‘Insanity is not uncommon among them; a fact which might have been expected, from the very violent and unbridled passions, to which they are subject’.²⁰⁹

Surgeons-superintendent occasionally reported cases of attempted suicide but again none of the women were identified as prostitutes. Sarah Wassell had displayed ‘proof of her mental imbecility’ from the moment of boarding and attempted to end her suffering by jumping overboard.²¹⁰ An institutionalised future was recommended for Sarah who was pronounced ‘unfit for service in any family’, due to her, ‘state of harmless imbecility’.²¹¹ On the *East London* Mary Healy attempted suicide, having previously ‘made many attempts to destroy life’ while in Grange Gorman.²¹² Margaret Murray sent for the surgeon-superintendent on board the *Mary Anne* ‘to say that she should die, and that her “heart was broken”.’ She had attempted to commit suicide by hanging herself from a cleat overhead and although her death was attributed to sea sickness, James Barr considered her to be in an excessively low state.²¹³ Barr later regretted that he was unable to perform a post mortem and examine the stomach, ‘being prevented partly by the horror diffused among ignorant and timid women at anything approaching to an inspection of a corpse.’²¹⁴ Another patient, Ann Walsh, was suspected of suffering from melancholia, and, unable to explain the cause of her death, Barr concluded that,

I think there can be little doubt as to her having taken ground glass, she denied it, but was such an abominable liar, I never believed that she vomited blood, till I actually saw it brought off.²¹⁵

Women who had spent time on the town were also listed among those who gave birth during the passage. The length of the voyage guaranteed that births would occur on female transports and when lists of hospital supplies carried the provision for ‘child-bed linen’, wooden cradles, and cases of midwifery instruments it indicated that the

²⁰⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/58 Reel 3206, Journal of the *Persian* (1827).

²⁰⁹ Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, p. 256.

²¹⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

²¹¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/69 Reel 3210, Journal of the *Sovereign* (1827).

²¹² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/22 Reel 3193, Journal of the *East London* (1843).

²¹³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1841) Surgeon-Superintendent James Barr. Margaret died en route to Van Diemen's Land.

²¹⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1841).

²¹⁵ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1841).

Admiralty too saw parturition as an inevitable part of the voyage.²¹⁶ While the lying-in was recorded in the journals, the delivery would have been performed by hospital attendants or a midwife, unless difficulties required the intervention of the surgeon-superintendent. Entries in the journals indicate that surgeons-superintendent were not always happy in that role. Samuel Sinclair expressed his genuine concern that,

the function of childbearing and Lactation being considered a debilitating process under the most favourable circumstances onshore it is difficult to believe that the condition of nurses would be improved under all the privations and restraints of a prison, and the factitious nature of the life they must lead on board... [which is] anything but what Nature intended as a proper situation for Nurses and young children.²¹⁷

Yet he was able to report a safe delivery after which he ‘Supplied them with the necessary child bed and baby linen – 6 changes of each and medical comforts.’²¹⁸

Elizabeth Paton delivered a healthy son on board the *America*, and while she described herself as ‘eighteen months an unfortunate’, the gaoler at Middlesex had listed her simply as ‘prostitute’.²¹⁹ But the birth left her weak and nauseous and in time her child began to waste. He only survived by being suckled by another prisoner.²²⁰ Sarah Jane Holden experienced a difficult labour on board the *Hope* in 1842. She suffered from convulsions and paroxysms, which Surgeon-Superintendent Roberts relieved by removing twenty ounces of blood. Eventually the child was born to an unconscious mother. Sarah was given a dose of castor oil and another twenty ounces of blood was taken, then a dose of sulphate of magnesia administered. When Sarah finally acknowledged the infant she had no milk to feed it. Laudanum was prescribed, and fomentations were applied to her abdomen until she regained her health but no further mention was made of the child.²²¹ Sarah had spent two and a half years on the town, yet the tattoos on her arms told of an enduring familial bond. On one arm were the initials,

²¹⁶ *BPP, Transportation* 2, p. 347, Appendix no. 1, Hospital Furniture; p. 352, Appendix, no. 20, Instructions for Surgeons Superintendent on Board Convict Ships.

²¹⁷ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²¹⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/51 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary* (1831).

²¹⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831); TAHO CON40/1/7 Elizabeth Paton (79P) per *America* (1831), image 202.

²²⁰ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/1 Reel 3187, Journal of the *America* (1831).

²²¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/35 Reel 3198, Journal of the *Hope* (1842).

NH, JH and AH, with JH on the other arm. Within the year Sarah gave birth to another child in Launceston.²²²

The surgeon-superintendent on the *Mermaid* recorded that Mary Leary was delivered of a son and that both were initially doing well until she developed pyrexia and had difficulty feeding her infant.²²³ The infant gradually became emaciated and Surgeon-Superintendent Gilchrist suspected that Mary had insufficient milk to nourish him. Yet careful treatment meant that mother and son were transferred to the Colonial Hospital in Hobart Town.²²⁴ We know the fate of Mary Leary's baby because she told the colonial clerk, 'I had a child, died on Shore since we came here it was 6 weeks old.'²²⁵ When a boy was delivered on the *Woodbridge*, Martha Grey followed an age old tradition by naming him after the ship. Woodbridge was vaccinated twice during the three months prior to arriving in Hobart Town.²²⁶ Elizabeth and Sarah Jones also added to the *Woodbridge's* complement during the voyage, and while the indents state that all three women were previously on the town, none made such admission when they arrived with their new infants.²²⁷ Ann Nott was delivered of a strong and healthy son on board the *Eliza*, but he was born with a double hare lip and a cleft which extended back to the throat with no separation between the cavities of the mouth and nose. He was unable to suck and could only swallow with the greatest difficulty.²²⁸ But unlike so many newborns he was determined to survive and disembarked in good health.

Surgeon-Superintendent James Hall recorded that Ann Williams had been impregnated during the voyage by one of the crew. When she threatened to miscarry Hall suspected her of 'attempting by mechanical means to excite a miscarriage, as she is a wicked woman, and has borne children.'²²⁹ Both her gaoler and Mr Hall identified Ann as a prostitute and when she arrived in Van Diemen's Land, Ann stated that her husband Henry Brown had already arrived on the *Malabar*. Her unborn child did not survive as

²²² TAHO CON40/1/6, Sarah Jane Holden (456H) per *Hope* (1842), image 69.

²²³ Pyrexia is defined as fever.

²²⁴ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/53 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mermaid* (1828).

²²⁵ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Leary (71L) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 316.

²²⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/75 Reel 3213, Journal of the *Woodbridge* (1843) Surgeon-Superintendent Jason Lardner.

²²⁷ TAHO CON40/1/6, Sarah Jones (248J) per *Woodbridge* (1843), image 152; TAHO CON40/1/6, Elizabeth Jones (254J) per *Woodbridge* (1843), image 154.

²²⁸ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/23 Reel 3194, Journal of the *Eliza* (1830).

²²⁹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/52 Reel 3204, Journal of the *Mary Anne* (1822).

she was assigned on arrival. Catherine Murphy had spent two years on the town before she was transported. She gave birth to a son on board the *Waverley* and stated that Michael Connelly, the father of her son, was shortly to follow her on the *Isabella Watson*.²³⁰ To enable her to suckle her healthy newborn, the surgeon-superintendent prescribed her a diet of ‘peas[e]’ soup until they were landed in Hobart Town.²³¹

The many occasions when the surgeons-superintendent reported the safe delivery of a healthy infant should not disguise the high incidence of still births and infant mortality on female convict ships. Margaret Hebbbron, a stout young woman, who had spent eight months on the town before her conviction, delivered a stillborn child on board the *New Grove*.²³² When Frances Shepherd went into premature labour she delivered a stillborn female child.²³³ Frances regained her health and although she had spent four years on the town, she like Sarah Jane Holden carried the memorials of her distant family: ‘G S, T S, E S, G H AS’ and a heart on her right arm. Being now childless, she too was assigned on arrival.

Conclusion

A comparison of medical treatment for former prostitutes and women who were not so identified found no significant differences in the frequency of treatment for the two groups. Nevertheless women who were identified as prostitutes were slightly more likely to be treated than non-prostitutes and in particular were more likely to be treated for venereal disease. The higher incidence of venereal disease within the population of former prostitutes further supports the argument that they were involved in sex work and thus confirms the accuracy of that identification on their records.

This study was unable to confirm the opinion of some contemporary observers who believed that prostitutes were possessed of stronger and more robust constitutions than other women. Surgeons-superintendent showed no reluctance to treat women whom they knew to be prostitutes. Whether the mother was free, convict or convict prostitute,

²³⁰ TAHO CON40/1/8, Catherine Murphy (431M) per *Waverley* (1842), image 70.

²³¹ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/73 Reel 3212, Journal of the *Waverley* (1842).

²³² PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/56 Reel 3206, Journal of the *New Grove* (1835); TAHO CON19, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*New Grove*)

²³³ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/6 Reel 3189, Journal of the *Atwick* (1838).

it appears that their children were also treated alike. Other than identifying women as prostitutes, in most cases surgeons-superintendent did not describe them any differently to other women. So as the ship neared Hobart Town and the surgeon-superintendent pondered the documentation which he would present to the Colonial Secretary, it does not appear that women who had spent time on the town were singled out or materially disadvantaged during the voyage. The next step was to examine the movement of the women once the surgeon-superintendent handed them over to the colonial authorities.

CHAPTER 6: WHO WILL BE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED?

ASSIGNMENT: A QUESTION OF SKILLS

Introduction: Mary Ann Woods' story

Speculation about her future may not have troubled Mary Ann Wood as she studied the wooded hills and white shores which bordered the Derwent River. As the *Providence* made its way up the estuary, Mary Ann and her companion Sarah Hooker would have noticed that May in Van Diemen's Land was not the month of renewal and warmth which heralded the northern summer. Chilly grey skies marked their arrival and foreshadowed the storms which would engulf Surgeon-Superintendent Burnside and Master Wauchope. Burnside was accused of co-habiting with convict Julia Mills, and entertaining other female convicts in his cabin during the voyage. Wauchope was also implicated.¹ Neither Mary Ann nor Sarah were part of the official investigation into the officers' misconduct – perhaps two professed prostitutes from the streets of London were unacceptable bedfellows for men of rank.

The two young women whose pathways to Van Diemen's Land had run a parallel course, now found that their lives went in very different directions. Sarah Hooker had received mild approval from Mr Burnside and was considered suitable for assignment to B Thomas Esquire at Ringarooma Bay. But Sarah would have fared better had she misbehaved like her friend Mary Ann, and been detained in the Female Factory. For she was drowned, when the schooner *Sally* was wrecked near Cape Portland, en route to her new home. Together the girls had spent six months of solicitous re-education in the

¹ *Historical Records of Australia. Series 111, Despatches and Papers Relating to the Settlement of the States*, vol. 5, Frederick Watson (ed.) (Sydney, 1922), pp. 285-286, Governor Arthur to under Secretary Hay, 20 June 1826.

London Guardian Society before they fled its care, taking with them two bundles of the Society's linen. The Old Bailey had been their next challenge after which they shared the five month sea voyage. But now Mary Ann was alone to negotiate the vicissitudes of Van Diemen's Land. Burnside's appraisal of her was, 'Conduct very bad. She is one of Clancey's, Mullins' and Norman's Gang of Devils. Often in irons and in the Coal-Hold.'² This particular 'Devil' was escorted to the Factory.

By the time that convict women prepared to disembark in Van Diemen's Land their reputation had already reached dry land. Each woman was preceded by a collection of sentences, words, nouns, adjectives and numbers, which had been delivered to the Lieutenant-Governor, and alerted authorities as to her potential value or threat. Words such as 'reprobate' and 'refractory', sounded a warning while, 'industrious' or 'manners respectable' hinted at the possibility of reform.³ But how persuasive were those thousands of words which authorities accumulated on prostitutes who arrived between 1822 and 1843? And how important were their judgements in determining the direction which each woman took as she left the ship? Shipboard treatment failed to provide a reason for retaining the label of 'prostitute' on the women's records. It also failed to show that the women had been disadvantaged on board the transports. The manner of disposing of women within the colony was next examined, to see if prostitutes were treated any differently on land.

Women were introduced to the colonial authorities when the Colonial Secretary presented the gaol list, assignment list, manifest and indent to the Muster Master. This exchange of records enabled officials to create the documents which would determine the women's future. The Muster Master prepared two abstracts which provided a brief summary of each woman including her offence, sentence and background, to which was added the prisoner's own statement on arrival. By 1831 it was mandatory for ships to berth in Hobart Town, thereby enabling the Muster Master to interview and document

² TAHO CON40/1/9, Mary Ann Wood (217W) per *Providence* (1826), image 266; Surgeon-Superintendent Burnside was referring to Ann Clancey (TAHO CON40/1/1); Julia Mullins (TAHO CON40/1/7) and Margaret Norman (TAHO CON40/1/7).

³ 'refractory': TAHO CON40/1/1, Rachael Chamberlain (45C) per *Mary Anne* (1822), image 257; 'industrious': TAHO CON40/1/2, Sophia Barber (402B) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 57; 'manners respectable': TAHO CON40/1/1, Catherine Barry (232B) per *Hydery* (1832), image 180.

the new arrivals.⁴ In this task he was often accompanied by the Principal Superintendent of Convicts. Their purpose was to ‘ascertain what has been the previous line of life’ of the prisoner.⁵

Each woman was questioned and measured, and a physical description was recorded which created a textual snapshot for future identification.⁶ Moles, birthmarks, deformities and tattoos were all carefully described. The intimate details which are found on the description lists indicate that women were often undressed to detect any distinguishing marks. Mary Sim was noted as having a ‘Long scar along inside left side’. Elizabeth Slater had a ‘long scar on her left leg’, and Jean Mc Lauchlan had a ‘large scar on breast’.⁷ The clerk who documented the women from the *Mary* in 1831 took few pains to spare their feelings as he listed characteristics such as, ‘big hands’, ‘sullen countenance looks like a Creole’, and ‘mouth awry’.⁸ Elizabeth Taylor was noted as ‘rather lame’ indicating that Surgeon-Superintendent Malcolm had successfully restored some of her mobility after her fall on the *Sovereign*.⁹ Elizabeth McKinnon’s description record was annotated with the words, ‘Memo: for Indent take out the words “refuses to tell the truth” Dr. saying she was confused.’¹⁰ The instruction was followed because Elizabeth McKinnon’s indent does not contain her refusal.

From these interviews the description lists were compiled which included the woman’s trade.¹¹ No mention of past prostitution appeared on that document. Nor was it entered on the appropriation lists which were also created using information from these

⁴ Peter Ross Eldershaw, *Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania*, Section 3, Convict Department, (TAHO, 2003 [1965]), p. 6. Eldershaw believed that the Muster Master interviewed newly arrived prisoners. Josiah Spode described how as Principal Superintendent of Convicts he also conducted the interviews: TAHO CSO22/1/50, ‘Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43’, p. 134, evidence of Josiah Spode.

⁵ TAHO CSO22/1/50, ‘Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43’, p. 134, evidence of Josiah Spode.

⁶ *British Parliamentary Papers, Report from the Select Committee on Transportation Together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index, Crime and Punishment, Transportation 2* (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 282, evidence of Lieutenant George Arthur.

⁷ TAHO CON19, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Rajah*). The Elizabeth Slater referred to here was not a prostitute. Unlike the prostitute who was tried in Liverpool this one arrived from Ireland.

⁸ TAHO CON19/1/13, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Mary*), Sarah Meadowcroft, Mary Smith, Laura Whittaker.

⁹ ML TP 21 CY 1273, Ship manifest for the *Sovereign*; ML TP 22 CY 1274 A List of 81 Female Convicts embarked on the Ship *Sovereign*. There is no surviving description list for the *Sovereign*.

¹⁰ TAHO CON19, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Harmony*).

¹¹ TAHO CON19, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853; Eldershaw, *Guide to the Public Records*, p. 21. No description list survives for the *Providence* although the interview process would have taken place.

interviews. The women's statements were, however, included in the CON40 series which was retrospectively created between 1827 and 1828 and became known as the 'black books'.¹² The interview process could take several days but once completed, the findings were delivered to the Lieutenant-Governor. An appropriation list was then drawn up identifying the women available for assignment, and the settlers' requests for servants. It was on the basis of these documents that the Lieutenant-Governor, Muster Master and Assignment Board, matched the women's skills to the settlers' requirements.¹³

Disembarkation

Yet the uncertainty of assignment and a family to please was not the lot of all women who disembarked. When the *Sovereign* arrived in 1827 Sarah Wassall was conveyed to the Colonial Hospital, for although physically recovered from her suicide attempt, she was pronounced by the surgeon-superintendent to be mentally unfit to undertake assignment. His advice was not always heeded and Sarah's servitude was punctuated by brief unsuccessful periods of assignment which invariably saw her return to the Factory by reason of insanity. Elizabeth Taylor accompanied Sarah to the Colonial Hospital to complete her convalescence along with some who nursed infants or were soon to be delivered. The Female Factory or the Colonial Hospital received these women who were usually the first to leave the ship. Sir John Franklin explained his reasons for detaining women in the Factory:

There will always be a remainder in the Factory from the ships so long as the particular individuals who help form a ship's company of women are made subjects of transportation; amongst these are the halt and the blind and the lame, the aged and the diseased, the

¹² Eldershaw, *Guide to the Public Records*, p. 4. The 'black books' were compiled by Edward Cook and contained details of convicts who arrived in the colony. They were thereafter maintained and updated. It is uncertain exactly which records were employed to create the CON40 series, Eldershaw, *Guide to the Public Records*, p. 27.

¹³ For detailed discussion on the complex system of labour allocation for female convicts see Kirsty Reid, 'Setting Women to Work: The Assignment System and Female Convict Labour in Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 34, no. 121 (2003).

mentally helpless and incapable, pregnant women, nursing mothers.¹⁴

The next to disembark were the recalcitrant who were destined for punishment. When the *Mary Anne* arrived in 1822, Rachael Chamberlain fitted that category.¹⁵ Her behaviour during the voyage had so affronted Surgeon-Superintendent James Hall that two days after arriving in Van Diemen's Land she and her equally unruly shipmate Sarah Fenton were sent to Macquarie Harbour.¹⁶ Surgeon-Superintendent Burnside made a similar judgement which guaranteed that Mary Ann Woods spent her first six months in the Factory after she left the *Providence* in 1826.¹⁷

Once allocated to a settler household, the women on the *Mermaid* had their new destination added to the inventory of their possessions which would be forwarded in due course.¹⁸ Emma Scott's belongings were sent to John Lord Esquire to whom she was assigned, while Ann Solomon's luggage remained with her and her four children at the Factory.¹⁹ Elizabeth Taylor's single bag accompanied her to the Colonial Hospital.²⁰ Money belonging to the women from the *Mary Anne* was transferred from Surgeon-Superintendent Barr to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts who deposited it on their behalf into the Derwent Bank.²¹ An increase in Catherine Power's financial assets is meticulously documented. The prostitute from Queen's County deposited 1/6 with Mr Barr prior to leaving the Port of Kingston in Ireland. At the Cape of Good Hope she deposited a further 1/-. In Hobart Town the amount which was finally transferred on her behalf from Mr Barr to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts had grown to 6/9 and that amount was deposited into the Derwent Bank.²² On the arrival of the *Hindostan*,

¹⁴ Sir John Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin on Female Convicts, Van Diemen's Land MDCCC XLIII Addressed to the Secretary of State, Lord Stanley, 4 June 1843* (Sullivan's Cove, 1996), pp. 13-14.

¹⁵ TAHO CON40/1/1, Rachael Chamberlain (45C) per *Mary Anne* (1822), image 257.

¹⁶ Phillip Tardif, *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls, Convict Women in Van Diemen's Land 1803-1829* (North Ryde, New South Wales, 1990), pp. 532, 537.

¹⁷ TAHO CON40/1/9, Mary Ann Wood (217W) per *Providence* (1826), image 266.

¹⁸ ML TP 21 CY 1273, List of packages belonging to female convicts on the *Mermaid*.

¹⁹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Emma Scott (137S) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 69; TAHO CON40/1/9, Ann Solomon (129S) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 65.

²⁰ TAHO CON40/1/9, Elizabeth Taylor (42T) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 171.

²¹ ML TP 30 CY 1282, Return of cash belonging to female convicts per ship *Mary Anne*.

²² ML TP 30 CY 1282, Money received by the Derwent Bank from the Principal Superintendent of Convicts; TAHO CON40/1/8, Catherine Power (also Palmer) (205P) per *Mary Anne* (1841), image 151. Catherine may have received remuneration from the sale of items of needlework.

Surgeon-Superintendent McDonald presented the sum of ten pounds four shillings and four pence to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts who was issued in turn with a receipt from the Derwent Bank. Prisoners were not allowed access to their savings on arrival and the strategy of 'denial' was reiterated by Lieutenant-Governor Arthur in his despatches of 1826. He explained that prisoners were not permitted to retain possession of money or articles which they had brought to the colony and those serving a life sentence were unable to draw on their funds for a period of two years.²³

The tumultuous activity and public scrutiny which surrounded the ship at the beginning of its voyage was repeated when the women disembarked. Such an arrival was a noteworthy event in the small settlement of Hobart Town. But disembarkation of women in Van Diemen's Land was at variance with the unruly scenes of arrival which are depicted in popular literature and serve as an indictment of female assignment. According to Robert Hughes, the upper deck of a newly arrived transport was 'a slave-market, as randy colonists came swarming over the bulwarks, grinning and ogling'.²⁴ John West, fierce opponent of transportation, depicted a slightly more benign scene when women arrived in Hobart Town on the *Kangaroo* from Sydney. He claimed that a

proclamation was made, and the settlers were invited to receive them. There was little delicacy of choice: they landed, and vanished; and some carried into the bush, changed their destination before they reached their homes.²⁵

But the motivations for West's assessment, and his reference to an earlier period, render his description equally uncharacteristic of arrivals during the 1820s to the 1840s. On the contrary, by the late 1820s it was governmental policy to disembark women under the cover of darkness to protect them from unwanted attention and to limit their opportunities of meeting prospective new male friends or reuniting with old ones.²⁶

That strategy may have been prompted by the scenes when women disembarked from the *Sir Charles Forbes* in 1827. The *Hobart Town Gazette* reported that John

²³ *Historical Records of Australia. Series 111*, pp. 628, 637.

²⁴ Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore* (London, 1987), pp. 252-253.

²⁵ John West, *The History of Tasmania with Copious information respecting the Colonies of New South Wales Victoria South Australia &c, &c, &c*, A G L Shaw (ed.) (Sydney, 1981[Launceston, 1852]), p. 47.

²⁶ TAHO CSO84/1/1, Letterbook of Memoranda addressed to the Principal Superintendent of convicts (April 1828-September 1829), Colonial Secretary to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts, 22 December 1828, p. 189. (The correspondence ordered that women were to be disembarked from the colonial vessel *Prince Leopold* at 4 a.m.)

Botheroyd, his wife Elizabeth Gould, Margaret Styles, and John Lewis, were charged with assaulting a constable when

these persons, crowding on the Government Wharf while the female prisoners were landing from the transport *Sir Charles Forbes*, being requested to stand back, not only rudely and insolently refused to comply, but pushed and abused the officers in the execution of their duty, using language too horrid to repeat. We cannot sufficiently deprecate such conduct in the presence of female prisoners just landing from England.²⁷

Whether the locals were keen to spot an old friend or taunt the uninitiated was not explained. A nocturnal landing also protected free female immigrants. Women were disembarked from the *Boadicea* at four o'clock in the morning, 'to avoid the inconvenience of popular curiosity.'²⁸ Female convicts were also required to dress in their drab regulation clothing to present a modest and decent first impression and further discourage unsuitable contacts.²⁹

Assignment

Women who had been assigned were the last to leave the ship. Close ship-board alliances were suddenly shattered as the women were distributed throughout the colony. So much of their future lay in the hands of men or women newly acquainted with power and devoid of the direct accountability for their welfare which marked the role of the surgeon-superintendent. On board the transport the prisoners had been subjected to a strict routine which standardised their diet, daily exercise and labour. The assurance of a high standard of health care was central to the contract between the surgeon-superintendent and the Secretary of State. Whilst the new master was held responsible for his assigned servant, the isolation of many properties and disparate circumstances

²⁷ *Hobart Town Gazette*, 13 January 1827, p. 2.

²⁸ Eustace FitzSimonds, *A Looking Glass for Tasmania. Letters, Petitions and Other Manuscripts Relating to Van Diemen's Land 1808-1845 and with a Number of Original Leaves Reproduced* (Sullivan's Cove, 1980), p. 259, citing a letter from John Montagu to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, 1 April 1836.

²⁹ Kirsty Reid, *Gender, crime and empire: Convicts, settlers and the state in early colonial Australia* (Manchester, 2007), p. 142.

and attitudes of colonial masters could never again guarantee that same universal standard of care.

Such was the pattern with each ship, where the majority of women were quickly assigned and the sick, incorrigible, pregnant or nursing were despatched to the Colonial Hospital or the Female Factory. In 1826 the most respected and influential citizens of Van Diemen's Land were eager to engage the services of the least respected and most powerless in the colony. The arrival of Mary Ann Wood and her *Providence* shipmates was therefore welcomed by Governor Arthur and the colony's landholders.³⁰ Four months earlier the Lieutenant-Governor had written to Under Secretary Hay informing him of the swift assignment of fifty women from the *Midas* but lamenting that the remainder had proceeded to New South Wales.³¹ The following year the *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser* reported that the *Sir Charles Forbes* had brought female servants to the colony and added that there were more ships on the way. The editor attributed this agreeable situation, to the authorities at home, having heeded the colonial press which repeatedly 'deplored that more women were not sent here'.³² In 1828 Governor Arthur detained women bound for New South Wales on the *Mermaid* to furnish the colony with female servants. But not all colonists valued the free labour. In an article headed, 'Applications for servants', the *Hobart Town Gazette* admonished settlers for their ingratitude wherein,

little attention is paid to the Government Order of the 30th Ultimo, pointing out the mode of applying for Convict Servants. It is evident ... that the Principal Superintendant cannot transmit men to the applicants unless they are present either personally or by an agent to fulfil the conditions. It is certainly neither practicable, nor at all consistent with the duty of a Public Officer, ... that he [Principal Superintendent Lakeland] should be expected to act upon a written application from a settler, perhaps 50 or 100 miles distant, to incur the expense and supply

³⁰ Kirsty Reid, 'Setting Women to Work', pp. 6-7. According to Reid, when the *Henry* arrived in 1825, with the exception of one very infirm, sickly old woman and three women with infants, all arrivals were assigned to settlers. In 1828 the Lieutenant-Governor detained women bound for New South Wales on the *Mermaid* because of the high demand for female servants in Van Diemen's Land. The same applied to the *Lady of the Lake*, *Mellish* and *Platina*. The *Launceston Independent* complained of the detention of women in female houses of correction when a shortage of female labour existed.

³¹ *Historical Records of Australia, Series 111*, vol. 5, pp. 26-27, Arthur to Under Secretary Hay, 3 Jan 1826.

³² *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser*, Friday 12 January 1827, p. 2.

the servant with the requisite clothing and provisions on his journey, and to procure a pass for him at the office of the Superintendent of Police.³³

When, seven years later, Josiah Spode replaced John Lakeland as Principal Superintendant, a similar lethargy affected some settlers. Spode wrote to the Colonial Secretary enclosing two letters, 'from 2 gentlemen on the other side of the Country relative to the inconvenience sustained in the obtaining of Female Servants and from that cause, have Refused to be at the expense of forwarding those assigned to them from the *New Grove*.'³⁴ Yet in spite of the occasional settler complaint, both Arthur and Franklin described the ease with which newly arrived women were assigned.³⁵

High numbers of domestic servants arrived in Van Diemen's Land, bearing witness to the fact that throughout the nineteenth century domestic service was regarded as an ideal form of paid employment for working-class women. It was performed in private and complied with a feminine code of service and dependence.³⁶ So while 'work was the sole corrective and just retribution for poverty', it was also desirable that women's work should coincide with what was considered as her natural sphere – the home.³⁷ The bulk of assignment for convict women in Van Diemen's Land meant just that.

The ideals of the assignment system were most fully realised during Governor Arthur's tenure from 1824 till 1836, when former prostitutes were absorbed into a system which held three levels of status for convict women – assignment, ticket-of-leave, or incarceration in a house of correction.³⁸ Lyndall Ryan describes it as a system of forced domestic labour punctuated by periods of confinement in a female factory.³⁹ Arthur's rule was a time of increased surveillance, not only of prisoners but of the free population, and there could be no doubt as to the role which he ascribed to the free settlers. They were 'auxiliaries hired by royal bounties, to cooperate with the great

³³ *Hobart Town Gazette*, 13 January 1827, p. 2.

³⁴ TAHO CSO1/790/16926, Josiah Spode, Principal Superintendent to the Colonial Secretary, 8 April 1835 (Correspondence relating to the *New Grove*).

³⁵ Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin*, pp. 12-13.

³⁶ Barbara Littlewood and Linda Mahood, 'Prostitutes, Magdalenes and Wayward Girls: Dangerous Sexualities of Working Class Women in Victorian Scotland', *Gender & History* 3 (1991), p.167.

³⁷ Sally Alexander, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: a Study of the Years 1820-50', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (eds.), *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* (Hammondsworth, 1979), p. 63.

³⁸ Reid, *Gender, crime and empire*, p. 137.

³⁹ Lyndall Ryan, 'The Governed: Convict Women in Tasmania 1803-1853', *Bulletin of the Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1990-92), p. 38.

machinery of punishment and reformation.’⁴⁰ In the words of Kathleen Fitzpatrick, ‘Arthur was not wantonly cruel; indeed, by the standards of his time he was a humane man. But he was a professional disciplinarian, a martinet by principle and practice’,⁴¹ and he viewed Van Diemen's Land as a vast gaol. Arthur saw his assignment system as the keeper of that gaol, and ‘the moral example of the free population was essential to the improvement of a class less favoured’.⁴²

Thus Mary Ann entered a colony whose penal strategies sought to deal effectively with erring women and reshape them into productive, useful and suitably deferential servants. Those who lacked references or a ‘character’ within their homeland, found a situation in households on the other side of the world. These households were the sites of a particular version of domestic ideology, and they shared Arthur’s emphasis on moral regulation and respectability.⁴³ By practising ‘utmost cleanliness, the greatest quietness, perfect regularity ... entire submission [and] patient industry ... reformation of character must be the result.’⁴⁴ That reform was also dependent upon dutiful service and the emulation of their betters. The spaces which women occupied as they moved through the system, the stages of their sentence and the nature of their official interactions, came to signify the progress of that reform.

The arrival of increasing numbers of female convicts and the burgeoning colonial economy of the 1820s and 1830s provided an environment to implement Commissioner Bigge’s recommendations as they applied to women.⁴⁵ Unlike the first decades of transportation to Van Diemen's Land, emphasis had now shifted to women’s labour potential rather than their reproductive role, as assignment rather than marriage increasingly determined their future.⁴⁶ And while reproduction and family formation

⁴⁰ West, *History of Tasmania*, p. 138.

⁴¹ Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Sir John Franklin in Tasmania, 1837-1843* (Melbourne, 1949), p. 15.

⁴² West, *History of Tasmania*, p. 81.

⁴³ Reid, *Gender, crime and empire*, p. 87.

⁴⁴ *Rules and Regulations for the Management of the House of Correction for Females* (Penitentiary Chapel Historic Site, Hobart 2011 [James Ross, Liverpool Street, Hobart Town, 1829]), p. 12.

⁴⁵ Marian Aveling [now Quartly], ‘Bending the Bars: Convict Women and the State’, in Kay Saunders and Ray Evans (eds.), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation* (Sydney, 1992), p. 153. Commissioner Bigge recommended that post 1820, convicts be redirected from public to private assignment with large landowners. This resulted in a decrease in government expenditure and positioned the government more as a disciplinarian than an employer. The Female Factory became less a factory for work and more for incarceration and punishment.

⁴⁶ Reid ‘Setting women to work’, p.10; Lyndall Ryan, ‘The Governed: Convict Women in Tasmania’, pp. 37-51. Both historians have written on the assignment system in Van Diemen's Land.

were ultimately a part of the colonial experience for former prostitutes, they did however arrive with the expectation that they would be put to work. The fallacy that female convicts were superfluous to the early colonial economy was effectively dispelled by Deborah Oxley in her examination of the 'economic baggage' of female convicts in New South Wales, and Kirsty Reid in her study of the assignment system in Van Diemen's Land.⁴⁷

The strategy to direct women into private assignment neatly furnished the growing middle-class demand for female servants.⁴⁸ Women who had spent time on the town were among those who served in the two storey villas of Davey Street, and the country estates of the colony.⁴⁹ But it was not solely the domestic sphere which drew women from the newly arrived transports. With the growth of small businesses and commerce, tradeswomen such as tailoresses, dressmakers, and shoemakers were highly prized, while cooks and servants were assigned to respectable hotels and eating houses.⁵⁰ Women with agricultural skills ventured into the interior and served the colony's middle and large scale landowners. Thus many assigned women disembarked in Hobart Town only to be faced with a further journey – usually on foot or cart but occasionally another sea voyage. Although Mary Ann Woods remained in the capital, many others such as Sarah Hooker were despatched to remote parts of the island to answer settlers' needs.

When settlers in remote locations complained of the cost and inconvenience of obtaining women from the *New Grove* in 1835, it indicated that the process was not always seamless.⁵¹ Spode told the Select Committee on Female Convict Discipline that women who were destined for Launceston were transferred to a government vessel.⁵² Somewhat disquieting was Spode's further statement that he 'lost sight' of convict women who were sent up the coast to Launceston and other northern areas.⁵³ If

⁴⁷ Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids, The Forced Migration of Women to Australia* (Cambridge, 1996); Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance'.

⁴⁸ Reid, 'Setting women to work', p. 6.

⁴⁹ Gordon Rimmer, 'Hobart: A Moment of Glory', in Pamela Statham (ed.), *The Origins of Australia's Capital Cities* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 109.

⁵⁰ Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance', p. 171.

⁵¹ TAHO CSO1/790/16926, Josiah Spode to the Colonial Secretary (correspondence relating to the *New Grove*).

⁵² TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 142, evidence of Josiah Spode.

⁵³ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 143, evidence of Josiah Spode.

immediate transfer was not possible, newly arrived women were segregated from other prisoners in a separate ward at the Female Factory until their removal could be arranged. Unassigned women who left the *Sir Charles Forbes* in January 1827 were also kept apart from other prisoners until they could be placed.⁵⁴

The task of delivering women to their prospective masters and mistresses was most satisfactorily carried out when a surgeon-superintendent could be persuaded to extend his term of employment.⁵⁵ George Forman, who accompanied the *Platina* in 1837, was subsequently employed by Sir John Franklin to conduct thirty women from Hobart to Launceston on the colonial brig *Tamar*. This practice was ongoing, for in 1842 Sir John secured the services of Surgeon-Superintendent William Bland to escort seventy eight women to Launceston after they left the *Garland Grove*.⁵⁶ The same year correspondence between Van Diemen's Land and Britain revealed that the transfer of female prisoners troubled officials both within the colony and at home. When Lord Stanley suggested that masters should be personally responsible for escorting their female assigned servants to their new homes, Governor Franklin pointed out that the 'highest class of settlers' would not be prepared to undertake the task, and any who would come themselves to fetch servants, would not really be of acceptable class anyway.⁵⁷ His Excellency assured Lord Stanley that during his term of office, women were always forwarded to Launceston on a government vessel and not by foot as was the previous practice.⁵⁸

Offence records reveal however that Governor Franklin's strategy was not infallible. In 1839, women from the *Majestic* were assigned to masters and mistresses at Launceston, Norfolk Plains, and the Van Diemen's Land Estate at Cressy. Four women who had spent time on the town boarded the government brig *Isabella* for the trip north. Each was charged with gross disorderly behaviour in having one or more crew members in

⁵⁴ *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser*, 12 January 1827, p. 2.

⁵⁵ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 142, evidence of Josiah Spode.

⁵⁶ PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101/60 Reel 3207, Journal of the *Platina* (1837) Surgeon-Superintendent George E Forman.

⁵⁷ Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin*, p. 24.

her bed.⁵⁹ Later the same year, the government brig *Tamar* was employed to despatch women from the *Hindostan* to the Launceston and Tamar regions. Seven women who were identified as prostitutes were charged with gross misconduct in going into the men's berths. They were each sentenced to fourteen days of solitary confinement, after which four of the women continued en route to their original destination.⁶⁰ Yet Josiah Spode seemed evasive when questioned about such activities. He claimed that it had never officially been reported that women slept with the crew on these ships.⁶¹

It was not only their initial assignment which caused women to travel around the island. The movement of women for reassignment to another master or removal to a House of Correction was also of concern to officials. Mary McGregor was pronounced by her first mistress to be a confirmed drunkard and her weakness for alcohol guaranteed a regular change of employment.⁶² But when in 1835 she was charged with failing to proceed to her service by coach as ordered, it highlighted the casual arrangements which governed the movement of some women. In 1826 Ann Sims was sent by boat from Launceston to the Female Factory at George Town. Her journey was delayed by a trip to the magistrate when she absconded from the boat.⁶³ As with so many aspects of female servitude, movement within the colony required a degree of compliance and co-operation on the part of the women. When this broke down, authorities possessed limited means of control.

⁵⁹ Jane Jackson received fourteen days in solitary confinement for having one of the crew in her bed. Mary Lorimer, received seven days for having some of the crew in her bed, after which she received no other colonial charge. Caroline Ann Lucas also received fourteen days for having some of the crew in her bed, and Sarah Steer received seven days in the cells for having one of the crew in bed with her. Steer received no other colonial charge. The two women who received the lesser sentences had no subsequent charges recorded against their names after that initial incident.

⁶⁰ TAHO CON40/1/2, Jane Mac Cartney (380C) per *Hindostan* (1839), image 182; TAHO CON40/1/2, Mary Cavannah (375C) per *Hindostan* (1839), image 81; TAHO CON40/1/2, Ann Cooley (379C) per *Hindostan* (1839), image 182; TAHO CON40/1/8, Eliza Meadows ((290M) per *Hindostan* (1839), image 23; TAHO CON40/1/8, Elizabeth Rickwood (200R) per *Hindostan* (1839), image 199; TAHO CON40/1/10, Sarah Sefton (386S) per *Hindostan* (1839), image 33; TAHO CON40/1/10, Martha Vico (18V) per *Hindostan* (1839), image 149.

⁶¹ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 143, evidence of Josiah Spode.

⁶² TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary McGregor (106G) per *Mary* (1831), image 263.

⁶³ TAHO CON40/1/9, Ann Sims (also Simons and Simms) (67S) per *Mary* (1823), image 34.

By using appropriation lists it is possible to trace the initial movements of women through the official plans for their future.⁶⁴ However the limitations in dealing with nineteenth-century records are again apparent in that the information on appropriation lists is frequently incomplete and they are not always a reliable guide as to how the women were distributed on arrival. Alterations were often made to the woman's original destination and sometimes this amendment was recorded and at other times not, or rather it has not survived. Women sent to Launceston were frequently noted as just that, and presumably the northern distribution was done when they reached Launceston but those lists have not survived. In 1830 twenty convicts were sent to Hollow Tree (Bothwell) and Michael Vicary the Police Magistrate simply noted that they had been assigned to various settlers 'by lottery'.⁶⁵

Some women's names were annotated with 'vacant' or 'factory' and it is not always clear whether punishment, pregnancy, ill health, skill deficit, or insufficient applicants delayed their assignment. Handwriting on appropriation lists is at times illegible, particularly when combined with poor quality ink or lead pencils. Precise identification of masters is not always possible with inconsistent spelling of surnames and failure to include initials which might clarify the owner of a more common surname.

Assigning the women labelled as 'prostitute'

To examine patterns of assignment for women who were identified as prostitutes, sixteen ships were selected to give a broad representation of the three decades of assignment covering the 1820s 1830s and 1840s.⁶⁶ By limiting the number of ships, it was possible to make a comparative analysis of the assignment of both prostitutes and non-prostitutes. The sixteen ships contained 2081 women, 686 of whom were designated as prostitutes, while the remaining 1,395 had no such indication on their records. Smaller numbers also enabled an examination of the types of households and particular masters and mistresses who received the women.

⁶⁴ It appears that women on the *Rajah* did not go where the appropriation list indicated. Appropriation lists can be located at: TAHO CON27; TAHO MM/5; ML TP D5, 22, 25-27, 29-30, 34.

⁶⁵ RS/48/1, *Bothwell Police Office daily journal 1829-1830*, Saturday 11 September 1830, Michael Vicary Police Magistrate Bothwell.

⁶⁶ Appendix K: List of ships used to examine assignment patterns.

In 1988 Stephen Nicholas exposed the flaws in the current historiography of Australian convictism, one of which suggested that the allocation of convict labour was a 'mere lottery'. His empirical research concluded that the colonial labour market represented an efficient allocation of skills.⁶⁷ At the same time Deborah Oxley revealed that female convicts were a highly skilled and valuable addition to the colonial economy.⁶⁸ Kirsty Reid then demonstrated that in spite of some fluctuations caused by the arrival of free immigrant women, female convict labour in Van Diemen's Land was valued, in demand, and more importantly matched to settlers' needs.⁶⁹ The question of how efficiently the skills of the women in this study were allocated cannot ignore the annotation of 'prostitute' which appeared on their record. Whether that label held any implications can only be assessed by a comparative examination of their appropriation to detect any differences in how the two groups of prostitute and non-prostitute were distributed.

When Jane Chapman and Jane Cale arrived on the *Rajah* in 1841, they were both despatched to A B Jones Esquire at Westbury. Jane Cale had spent three months on the town and Jane Chapman had no mention of prostitution on her record. Their names appear consecutively on the appropriation list which suggests that an official may have moved down a list, allocating women in order. Chapman was recorded as a nurse, and Cale was a house servant, and both had needlewoman as their second trade.⁷⁰ Without knowing the exact request which Jones made to the Assignment Board, it is hard to determine whether the women's skills were tailored to the Jones household. But it is clear that the official, who may have been Josiah Spode, considered the women equally suitable to serve the household.

To investigate the question more fully, a sample was firstly taken of women who were not selected for assignment. The reason why some women remained unassigned was often explained because it was noted on the appropriation list. (Table 6:1 below)

⁶⁷ Stephen Nicholas and Peter Shergold, 'Unshackling the Past', in Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's past* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 10-11; Stephen Nicholas, 'The Convict Labour Market', in Nicholas, *Convict Workers*, p. 125.

⁶⁸ Deborah Oxley, 'Female Convicts', in Nicholas, *Convict Workers*, p. 95.

⁶⁹ Kirsty Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance; The Convict Women of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839', A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh (1995), pp. 190-232, particularly pp. 198-199.

⁷⁰ ML TP 22 CY 1274, Appropriation list for the *Rajah* (1841).

Table 6.1: Women who remained unassigned (by percentage of the total of each group)

Reason for non assignment	Prost nos	Prost %	Non-prost nos	Non-prost %
Punishment	8	1.2	7	0.5
Nursing infant	8	1.2	43	3.1
Sick	17	2.5	61	4.4
‘Vacant’ on record	5	0.7	10	0.7
Handwriting illegible	7	1	13	1
Too young for assignment	0	0	11	0.8
Blank no explanation	56	8.2	83	5.9
Total nos not assigned	101	14.7%	228	16.3%

Source: Appropriation lists

Punishment accounted for 1.2 per cent of prostitutes remaining unassigned and 0.5 per cent of non-prostitutes. Women who were either sick or nursing an infant recorded a higher percentage among the non-prostitute group as did girls who were too young for assignment. A total of 2.5 per cent of prostitutes and 4.4 per cent of non-prostitutes on the sixteen ships were sick on arrival.⁷¹ Some medical conditions should have disqualified them from undertaking the voyage. Two women were described as idiotic, two were lame and another two were cripples. Others were described as deranged, subject to fits, epileptic, nearly blind, insane, and rheumatic. Eliza Smith was not assigned because she was ‘presumed insane’, and an annotation to that effect appeared on her appropriation record.⁷² A higher percentage of non-prostitutes were found to be nursing an infant on arrival and therefore not assignable. Where the handwriting was illegible, or the word ‘vacant’ appeared on the list, both groups were equally represented.

Interestingly, records which were blank and offered no explanation were more likely to belong to prostitutes. The identification of a woman as a prostitute was not present on her appropriation list, nor the description list since prostitution was no longer a trade

⁷¹ That is 17 prostitutes and 60 non-prostitutes.

⁷² TAHO CON40/1/10, Eliza Smith (413S) per *Navarino* (1841), image 42. Eliza was not identified as a prostitute.

which interested the colonial authorities. But the label remained on her CON40, the conduct record which was designed specifically to manage convicts and which was accessible only to a small inner circle of officials which included Josiah Spode. Spode revealed to the Select Committee on Female Convict Discipline that he consciously selected the most respectable women for the most respectable situations, so his decisions were neither random nor uninformed.⁷³ Those decisions appear to have more frequently left prostitutes unassigned.

Over the sixteen-year period between 1826 and 1842 households which received the highest number of newly arrived female servants were Government House, which received twenty four, and Edward Dumaresqu Esquire and Josiah Spode Esquire who each received eleven. Thomas Allen Lascelles, Edward Curr Esquire, and the Reverend Mr Bedford each were assigned ten women, and Dr Ross, Dr Brock, Thomas Walker Esquire, H J Emmett Esquire, James Gordon Esquire, and Mrs Frankland each received nine female servants. Thomas Archer at Woolmers, Mrs Anthony Fenn Kemp, G Gunning Esquire and Dr Dermer received eight. The number of years during which the households received female servants varied, and not all households spanned the whole sixteen years.

Assuming that elite households were those which received the largest number of newly arrived female servants, the households were divided into three categories: those which received seven or more servants during the period, those which received four to seven servants, and those which received two to three assigned women. (Table 6:2 below)

Table 6.2: **Percentage of households which received women identified as prostitutes**

	Total number of servants	% prostitutes
>7	138	26.5
4-7	356	30.9
2-3	460	31.7

Source: Appropriation lists

The percentage of women labelled as prostitutes decreased as the household received greater numbers of female servants, with the elite group receiving a lesser proportion of

⁷³TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 135, evidence of Josiah Spode.

women labelled as prostitutes.⁷⁴ The household of Surveyor-General George Frankland Esquire received nine female servants during the period 1827 until 1838 and none were identified as a prostitute. The Frankland pedigree was superb: George's father had been canon of Wells Cathedral in Somerset, his mother the daughter of the Earl of Colville, and his grandfather was a baronet.⁷⁵

While a bias against women labelled as prostitutes seemed to be operating, the story is more complex because five ex-prostitutes were assigned to Government House.⁷⁶ They were among the twenty four women assigned to the colonial governors' families between the years 1826 and 1842. Sarah Clarke's CON40 stated that she had been on the town.⁷⁷ She had stolen £123 and perhaps not surprisingly received an unfavourable gaol report in Nottingham, yet the *Providence's* Surgeon-Superintendent Burnside reported that 'she conducted herself remarkably well and at all time evinced a willingness to comply with my orders and never in the least deviated from the Regulations of the Prison.'⁷⁸ Given that his unprofessional conduct towards female prisoners led to his dismissal, Burnside's comments could be viewed as somewhat ambiguous. Nevertheless Sarah was assigned to Mrs George Arthur at Government House. Sarah married the following year and recorded no offences during her time in the colony, vindication perhaps of the gubernatorial choice. During the time in which George Arthur occupied Government House it was home to his large family, and piety and strict morality were reputedly key elements of his household. Yet Government House did not appear to bar its doors to women who had been 'on the town'.⁷⁹ Mrs Frankland's doors however seemed firmly shut.

Apart from the Franklands, other large employers of female servants did receive women labelled as prostitutes although in proportionally lower numbers than non-prostitutes. Josiah Spode assigned eleven female servants to his household, but only one was

⁷⁴ Women labelled as prostitutes comprised 30.8 per cent of the total female convict population in this study.

⁷⁵ Peter R Eldershaw, 'Frankland, George (1800-1838)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/frankland-george-2064> (17 April 2012).

⁷⁶ Appendix L: Households which received two or more female servants.

⁷⁷ TAHO CON40/1/1, Sarah Clarke (84C) per *Providence* (1826), image 272.

⁷⁸ Tardif, *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls*, p. 863.

⁷⁹ These numbers are based on examination of the sixteen ships. I have adopted the term 'households' when it is of no significance whether it is a master or mistress who has received the prisoner or when no differentiation was made in the records.

identified as a prostitute.⁸⁰ Spode's claim that he always selected the most respectable female convicts for the most respectable situations, seemed to be operating when he assigned women to his own household.⁸¹ Reverend Bedford received a total of ten assigned women from the sixteen ships and again only one was identified as a prostitute.

At first glance it might appear that a measure of morality was dictating the type of female servant assigned to elite families. However by adopting Kirsty Reid's premise that female assignment was driven by an accurate allocation of skills a different picture emerges. The prostitute whom Josiah Spode assigned to his own household was described as a house servant and needlewoman; the 'needle' component probably being the deciding factor. Mrs Spode also received another needlewoman, two dressmakers, a lady's maid and dressmaker, and two laundresses, as well as general servants. When prostitute Sarah Clarke entered Mrs George Arthur's service at Government House, she took with her needlework and lace embroidery talents along with an ability to cook, wash and 'get up' linen.

It could therefore have been the specific nature of the Frankland's requests which excluded the majority of women identified as prostitutes. Mrs Frankland received, and presumably requested, highly skilled female servants, such as a cook, a lady's maid and dress maker, a laundress who could get up fine linen, a laundress and plain needlewoman. She also received some general servants and a nursery maid. Only 4.7 per cent of prostitutes were described as a cook or even plain cook, 1.7 per cent as dressmakers and none were lady's maids.⁸²

Examining the female servants who were assigned to the Bedford household, it is apparent that the Bedfords had a penchant for servants with culinary skills. Five cooks, one housekeeper and professed cook, and two general servants who could cook, entered the Bedford household. The one woman identified as a prostitute was a servant of all work, and she was assigned in response to his request for a female servant when no particular skill was specified.

⁸⁰ That was between the years 1831-1842.

⁸¹ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 135, evidence of Josiah Spode.

⁸² Appendix G: Trades of women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land 1829-1842.

So a careful allocation of skills would appear to be operating in the distribution of women labelled as prostitutes. The emphasis on skills can also be seen in some households which received smaller numbers. Captain Glover of Pittwater had specific requirements for female servants in that he received dairy maids, one farm servant and one laundress. So the preference for servants with rural skills could explain the apparent absence of women labelled as prostitutes from among the five women assigned to Captain Glover.⁸³

With the exception of the Franklands, households with larger numbers of assigned women generally received some women labelled as prostitutes. To argue a case in favour of discrimination based on morality would be to assume that the Governor, Principal Superintendent, Muster Master or Assignment Board made a conscious decision to assign women with a history of prostitution to the Governor's family whilst at the same time declining to do so for Surveyor-General Frankland. In Josiah Spode's household, the ratio of women labelled as prostitutes is very low but again the specific qualifications of his servants would suggest that skill rather than morality may have been the criterion. The same could be said of the Bedford household. Thus a form of discrimination could be said to be operating on women labelled as prostitutes but its origins predated their work as prostitutes. The discrimination stemmed from their early vocational disadvantage.

The households which received all prostitutes were generally smaller, and held less land or wealth, and presumably less clout to demand a particular skill. They may also have been perceived as having less need for a specific type of servant such as one experienced in farm and dairy work or a lady's maid. A general house maid may have been considered to be suitably qualified to attend to the needs of a modest urban household. And it is within that occupational group where the majority of women labelled as prostitutes were found.

When Lady Franklin stated that care was taken to allocate trained and experienced women to the households of the colonial dominant class, she articulated precisely what the appropriation lists reveal.⁸⁴ Anecdotal evidence does however suggest that there was

⁸³ Assignments to Captain Glover took place only during the years 1829 to 1831.

⁸⁴ Fitzpatrick, *Sir John Franklin in Tasmania*, p. 79.

a preference for English servants. Josiah Spode believed that English women were more useful,⁸⁵ and Sir John Franklin noticed a disinclination among settlers to accept Irish women as servants.⁸⁶ In 1842 when the *Waverley* was expected, the Assignment Board held many applications for female servants, but when it was discovered that the ship carried mainly Irish women, applications were withdrawn. Out of the 149 women, only one was immediately assigned although thirty more were assigned within a month. The reluctance to employ Irish women was based on their lack of experience in domestic service. Most applicants desired house servants or Oxley's 'convict maids'.⁸⁷ Whether or not they had also been prostitutes was immaterial in that decision.

As previously indicated, some women's appropriation record remained inexplicably blank.⁸⁸ For 8.2 per cent of prostitutes and 5.9 per cent of non-prostitutes there appeared no instruction as to their destination.⁸⁹ This group contained a large number of general servants and nurse maids. A high number of specialised trades were also represented such as weavers, potters, and a nailer, all of whom would have been hard to place within the new colony. But it also contained women who would have been very much sought after yet appeared to be unassigned. It included eleven farm servants, a governess who could teach piano, a milliner, three dressmakers, a straw bonnet maker, a stay maker, a sick nurse, two shoe binders, a tailor and shoe binder, a housekeeper, a hatter, two tailoresses, three laundresses, a housemaid who could educate children, and a midwife.

A disproportionately high number of the blank records belonged to women on the *Edward*.⁹⁰ Of those, 47.2 per cent were women who had been labelled as prostitutes and 26.0 per cent were non-prostitutes. And unlike the sick, incapacitated and nursing mothers, there was no explanation for the apparent failure to assign the women. If we assume that the blank records meant that they were not assigned then it would confirm a drop in demand for female servants in September 1834 when the *Edward* anchored in the Derwent. The *Strathfieldsay* had arrived a few weeks earlier, bringing 286 free female emigrants to the colony.

⁸⁵ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 136, evidence of Josiah Spode.

⁸⁶ Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin*, p. 12.

⁸⁷ Oxley, *Convict Maids*.

⁸⁸ Table 6.1: Women who remained unassigned (by percentage of the total of each group).

⁸⁹ Fifty three women were identified as prostitutes, and 72 were not.

⁹⁰ 49 out of the 125 women for assignment on the *Edward* had no destination recorded.

The arrival of free female immigrants caused temporary adjustments to the colonial labour market, when free housemaids and general servants were engaged in preference to their prisoner counterparts. So the large group of housemaids on the *Edward* may have been slower to place when faced with competition from female emigrant ships. But as Kirsty Reid pointed out, the glut was short lived, and by the end of the 1830s there was once again an acute shortage of female servants.⁹¹ Thus the higher percentage of prostitutes who remained unassigned from the *Edward* appears to be an effect of free immigration and not because they were noted as prostitutes on their CON40 record. It was because a greater percentage of prostitutes were also housemaids.

That does not however fully explain the blank records on the *Edward's* appropriation list, because the records did not only belong to housemaids. They also included a midwife, a dressmaker, laundresses, a 'complete' needlewoman, a housemaid who could educate children, and seven farm servants. While it is evident that free emigration explained the lower take up rate for house servants on the ship, it would appear that there was another force at play.

To understand this record it is helpful to reconstruct how the appropriation list for the *Edward* was created and, at the same time attempt to enter the mind of its creator. The appropriation list included the basic information concerning the woman's trade which was found on her description list but then, for appropriation purposes, many more skills were added to each woman's record. Annotations on the records of women who were not assignable due to illness or child nursing were entered in pencil. So too was the destination of women assigned to Mrs. Spode and Government House, recorded in pencil. It is therefore likely that the pencil annotation came first as their future was already mapped out for them. Then followed the general allocation which was executed in ink which saw women assigned to masters such as Thomas Walker Esquire, G C Clarke at Ellenthorpe, William Archer, Mrs Frankland, Thomas Horne Esquire, Mrs Dumaresqu, Major McLeod, and Lieutenant Gunn – certainly an élite group.

The several stages in the compilation of the list confirm that there were selective processes governing the assignment of women. These processes favoured the more 'desirable' servants who were at the same time reserved for élite settlers. The list for the

⁹¹ Reid, 'Setting Women to Work', p. 9.

Edward reveals a preliminary ‘cherry-picking’ which occurred alongside the early exclusion of women who through sickness and nursing were not available. A second round of allocations was then made where desirable servants were matched with the élite applicants. While the blank records appear to represent the least desirable there is evidence that some of them belonged to highly skilled or ‘highly recommended’ women suggesting that they were held in readiness for a particular household or destination.

Josiah Spode left a clue as to his methods when he made his preliminary perusal of the list and pencilled in the first level of allocation which singled out the sick and unassignable as well as the servants for his own household and Government House. At the same time he used the pencil to place asterisks against the names of fourteen women who were then assigned to settlers such as Thomas Walker, William Archer, Mr Petrie (Hobart), Mrs Frankland, Mrs Cutts (Hobart), Thomas Horne, Mr Mc Michael, Lieutenant Gunn, Lieutenant Murray (Hobart) and Mr Braithwaite. Three women whose records remained blank had been similarly singled out with an asterisk. The one thing which links all fourteen women was that they had favourable reports from the surgeon-superintendent placed onto their CON40 record, and coincidentally none of them were women who had been identified as prostitutes. While skills were most certainly being referenced in the allocation, there was also a strong emphasis on character (as judged by the surgeon-superintendent) which in this instance determined which of the women remained unassigned from the *Edward*. That attention to ‘character’ was of course a luxury in times of high labour availability. The *America* which had arrived in 1831 saw all available women assigned with only two tailoresses and one shoe binder left unassigned. Women from the *America* have no surgeon-superintendent report on their CON40 record, but many had negative gaol reports which in a time of full employment would possibly have disqualified them from assignment.

At times when labour was scarce and former prostitutes automatically entered assignment, except for a minority, their skill levels limited them to the ‘middling’ households since those skills were less specialised or desirable. When there was less demand for labour, then ‘character’ would have been a significant factor, so if they had earned a negative report either from their gaoler or the surgeon-superintendent it compounded their disadvantage. But that did not apply exclusively to former prostitutes.

Conclusion

The hundreds of thousands of words which authorities accumulated on prostitutes did determine the direction of their assignment. But it was not ultimately the words which identified them as prostitutes which influenced their future, but the words which revealed the gaps in their vocational background. Those words furnished them with insufficient evidence of skill levels to qualify them as *élite* or more desirable servants. A history of prostitution on a woman's record did not exclude her from the labour pool. In times of high labour demand, women labelled as prostitutes were assigned, but they were among the most disposable servants. In that respect former prostitutes were not dissimilar to many low skilled housemaids, except that there were more among the prostitute cohort. In times of greater competition they were the least desirable and most disadvantaged particularly if they had previously received an unfavourable report. Yet an unfavourable gaol or surgeon's report could have long term effects on any woman's future whether or not she had been identified as a prostitute.

The label of prostitute was therefore not in itself the determinant. There is no evidence that officials were biased against prostitutes, or even practised a systematic cover-up of any aversion to women identified as prostitutes. Since these women were assigned, although less often to *élite* households, it again raises the question of why then was the label retained on their records. Their manner of assignment did not account for its continued presence on their records. What was more significant on their record was the list of skills which they possessed. The surgeon's report was also a consideration but that did not demonstrate a bias against women labelled as prostitutes. Authorities failed to document any distinction between women who had practised prostitution and those who did not.

CHAPTER 7: A FAMILY TO PLEASE.

ASSIGNMENT: LEARNING THE RULES

Introduction: Rosanna Savelin's story

It was not only to shield her from the spring showers that Rosanna Savelin hugged a large shawl to her body as she hurried along Upper King Street, Bloomsbury.¹ The red-headed eighteen-year-old had spent twelve months on the town in her native London, but today she entered William Moore's shop and informed his assistant Thomas Loughborough that she required a pair of ladies' shoes.² When Rosanna left the shop a pair of men's boots left with her, hidden under her shawl. She was apprehended while sheltering from the rain in a passage in Southampton Row, and within two months had been sentenced to seven years' transportation to Van Diemen's Land. Rosanna spent the next two months in company with six other young women who waited to board the *Frances Charlotte*. A record remains of how they must have occupied their time for they were the only women on the ship whose bodies were tattooed. Recorded on their bodies were symbols of hope, love, and their Christian faith as well as the names of their loved ones. But Rosanna's affections may not have been returned, for Mary Glover the object of her affection chose not to have a declaration on her own body.³ (Figure 7:1 below)

¹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Rosanna Savelin (also Rosina Savilin) (231S) per *Frances Charlotte* (1833), image 116.

² *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey London's Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913* online: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/images.jsp?doc=183206050107>, 5 June 1832, p. 107 (9 October 2010).

³ TAHO CON19/1/12, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Frances Charlotte*), 'Anchor M D Mary Glover I L 13 stars ins rt. arm Love & William I B ins left arm'. Mary Glover had no tattoos.

Figure 7.1: Description list for Rosanna Savelin per *Frances Charlotte*

NAME, *Savelin Rosanna* No. *No. Servant*

Trade *Housemaid*

Height *without shoes 5/2*

Age *18*

Complexion *Fair*

Head *large*

Hair *Reddish*

Whiskers

Visage *Oval*

Forehead *Perpetual*

Eyebrows *Reddish*

Eyes *Grey*

Nose *Small*

Mouth *M. width*

Chin *Short dimpled*

Remarks *Anchor M D Mary Glover I L. 13 Stars on rt. Arm. Love & William I B ins left arm*

Source: TAHO CON19 Description lists for female convicts 1828-1853 (*Frances Charlotte*)

When Rosanna arrived in the colony, she was assigned as a housemaid to serve the Wood family in Launceston, and in spite of being separated, she took her memory of Mary Glover with her as she moved through seven years of assignment and punishment.

Women who had previously worked as prostitutes overwhelmingly entered household service in Van Diemen's Land. They were to be found in the kitchens and nurseries rather than the dairies of the colony, and were a constant presence in the lives of settler women and children. And although they were integral to the running of the households, the stories of women such as Rosanna are absent from the diaries and letters of the families they served. As with many aspects of female servitude, their contribution is primarily read through official attempts to punish and modify their behaviour. The number of charges recorded against convict women, whether or not they are deserved, at least affirm their active role within households, so those events are the entry point to understand the assignment experience for women labelled as prostitutes.

Many charges involved disputes over day to day working relations, rather than breaches of the criminal law; the injustice of which did not escape some contemporary observers. An article in the *New South Wales Government Gazette* in 1832 commented on the

regularity with which female convicts were charged with offences involving awkwardness or misbehaviour, which in free servants would have earned a gentle reproof.⁴ Frances Waddell had six charges entered onto her conduct record, five of which were for being absent from divine service and muster on Sunday.⁵

The propensity for a master or mistress to prosecute their assigned servant was subject to many factors which often had little to do with the woman's behaviour. Prisoners under assignment could not automatically be 'exchanged', so to secure a replacement for one who was considered to be unsuitable by their master or mistress it was necessary to successfully charge the unwanted servant with an offence. Hence masters used the magistrate's bench as a 'firing mechanism' in the hope of acquiring a more desirable servant next time.⁶ A highly skilled employee was less likely to be prosecuted than one with fewer skills to offer their employer.

The inconvenience of despatching a servant to the local magistrate often discouraged employers from prosecuting servants in more remote areas, yet made it an easier option in populated regions where a magistrate was more likely to be situated. And the decision whether to bring a charge was also governed by the labour market which could mean that when labour was scarce any servant was to be retained, whereas a surfeit of labour offered the possibility of acquiring a more skilled worker. So women's offence records cannot be read as an accurate indication of either 'good' or 'bad' behaviour. Charges were governed by a complex maze of interrelated factors.

In spite of the many influences which determined whether or not a woman was charged, it is still a means of determining any differences in the treatment of women who had been identified as prostitutes and those who had not. Thus the records of 1,114 women from fourteen ships were examined to compare the rates at which each group was charged.⁷ This investigation has utilized the transcriptions of offence records in the biographies created for Phillip Tardif's *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls*:

⁴ Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 202, citing the *New South Wales Government Gazette* 13, 30 May 1832, p. 111.

⁵ TAHO CON 40/1/9, Frances Waddell (48W) per *Mary* (1823), image 246. Frances was not identified as a prostitute.

⁶ Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, 'The Bushrangers and the Convict System of Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1846', A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh (1990), p. 122.

⁷ Appendix M: List of ships used for a comparative analysis of charges made against assigned women.

Women in Van Diemen's Land 1803-1829.⁸ It has also used information from Dr Trudy Cowley and Dr Dianne Snowden's biographies of the *Rajah* women.⁹

All charges have been included although the outcomes could vary from the charge being dismissed, a reprimand being given, or more serious punishment meted out. Women who died or left the colony within the first weeks of arriving were excluded from the count.

Table 7.1: Comparison of all charges brought against convict women

Nos of charges	Nos prostitutes	% prostitutes	Nos non-prostitutes	% non-prostitutes
Nil recorded	30	8.1	110	14.8
1-4	114	30.9	321	43.1
5-9	99	26.8	159	21.3
10-19	86	23.3	104	14.0
20-29	22	6.0	35	4.7
30+	18	4.9	16	2.1
	369	100	745	100

Source: TAHO CON40 (1,114 records)

By percentage, women identified as prostitutes had more charges laid against them than non-prostitutes. That was evident in most categories except for 1-4 charges where non-prostitutes dominated. There are possible reasons why women labelled as prostitutes were more often charged. Firstly they belonged to a younger cohort and that alone carried a number of implications. They may have spent less time in the workplace to develop what an employer considered to be a suitably respectful attitude, or they may have lacked an understanding of workplace relations, or even workplace survival strategies. And of course the niceties of a middle-class domestic household could have been unfamiliar to some young women who had worked in factories or workshops. Even for those who had previously worked in domestic service, the kitchen or scullery may have been the parameters of their experience. Prostitutes also possessed fewer

⁸ Phillip Tardif, *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls: Women in Van Diemen's Land 1803-1829* (North Ryde [NSW], 1990).

⁹ Trudy Cowley and Dianne Snowden, *Patchwork Prisoners: the Rajah Quilt and the women who made it* (Hobart, 2013). Biographies of the *Rajah* women are available at: www.researchtasmania.com.au (8 June 2011).

skills for the reasons outlined earlier, so were more likely to fall victim to the ‘firing mechanism’ of the magistrate’s bench. Finally, women who had been accustomed to fend for themselves and make their own way may indeed have been more assertive and less prepared to tolerate a master or mistress. As Judith Walkowitz discovered, ‘Seasoned prostitutes were capable of independent and assertive behaviour rarely found among women of their own social class’.¹⁰ Some of these reasons could apply to all female convicts although those identified as prostitutes were younger, less skilled and possibly more assertive. The relationship between an assigned servant and her employer was therefore complex.

Absent and improperly wearing her mistress’s clothes¹¹

Among documents pertaining to the *Providence*, is a list of masters and mistresses who unsuccessfully applied for female servants from that ship.¹² They include Thomas Dixon, David McKay, John Martin, Harris Walker, and Alexander Buchanan as well as female applicants Elinor Brim Mary Simmons, Mary Blackwell, Rachael Williams and Sarah Whitehouse.¹³

On this occasion the female applicants were unsuccessful, but as Mrs Frankland’s requests have shown, prisoners were frequently assigned to women and were certainly under the supervision of mistresses within households. Even when a male was the applicant, it was more often his wife or female relative who supervised the female servants. Appropriation lists and CON40 records indicate that women labelled as prostitutes were also routinely assigned to mistresses. Thus, there appeared to be no

¹⁰ Judith R Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 20.

¹¹ TAHO CON40/1/2, Catherine O’Brien (364B) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 44.

¹² ML TP 25 CY 1277, Appropriation list for the *Providence*.

¹³ Some of these refusals may have been because they were licensees of public houses. This may be the Thomas Dixon who in 1826 was licensee of a pub in Goulburn Street. David McKay ran lodgings and a dealership in Argyle Street and John Martin ran a public house in Argyle Street in 1826. Rachael Williams ran a public house in Melville Street, Hobart Town in 1826: Allport Library and Museum of Fine Art, *The Tasmanian Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1826, being the second after leap year, calculated for the Meridian of Hobart Town Longitude 147° 25’E – Latitude 43° 5’S to which are added Lists of the Civil and Military Establishments, and Public Institutions, in the Dependency; with other Information not published in any of the previous Almanacks* (Hobart Town, 1826 compiled and printed by Andrew Bent), pp. 66-71. Women in this study were often charged with being at John Martin’s house.

deliberate strategy to protect the sensibilities of élite wives and daughters from the company of women who had been prostitutes.

As in Britain, the mistress set the tone within the colonial household and she could also be instrumental in the reformation of the female criminal. Governor Arthur made it clear that male settlers were the proper heads of households and the most appropriate people to discipline convicts. Yet there was at the same time recognition of the role of women as moral mistresses.¹⁴ Since the female convict's moral reformation was linked to the need for gainful and constant employment it followed that with a suitable role model and appropriately prescribed labour, a favourable outcome might be expected.

While female criminals were deemed to have 'fallen' much further than men, they were also considered to be more malleable than their male counterparts, and therefore more likely to be reformed through close supervision – especially when this was provided by a respectable middle-class matriarch.¹⁵ The appointment of matrons at Magdalen houses, female factories and on transports was part of the feminization of the female prisoner and an attempt to restore those most 'feminine' qualities of morality and domesticity.¹⁶ Thus contemporaries argued that female convicts would be 'reformed' through the good example of their mistress.¹⁷ One measure of that reform was taken to be the frequency with which the prisoner appeared before the magistrate. The pitfalls of such a crude assessment have already been outlined.

Mary Ann Woods' six years of servitude within the colony were divided between assignment and incarceration. After her punishment for misconduct on the *Providence* Mary Ann entered the Reiby household. But compliance was not part of her agenda. Surgeon-Superintendent Matthew Burnside had described Mary Ann and the other troublesome women on the *Providence* as a gang of devils, and Mary Ann appeared to live up to her reputation when she refused to obey Mrs Reiby.¹⁸ Her next assignment to Mrs Field saw a period of mutual harmony until May 1830 when she was once again

¹⁴ Kirsty Reid, *Gender, crime and empire: Convicts, settlers and the state in early colonial Australia* (Manchester, 2007), p. 81.

¹⁵ Lucia Zedner, *Women, Crime and Custody in Victorian England* (Oxford, 1991), pp 120-124.

¹⁶ Kirsty Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance; the Convict Women of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839', A thesis submitted for the Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh (1995), pp. 106-107.

¹⁷ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', summary of evidence, p. 353.

¹⁸ TAHO CON40/1/9, Mary Ann Wood (217W) per *Providence* (1826), image 266.

punished for insolence to her mistress. Mary Ann's stormy relationship with her mistresses was not unique.

Convict women were frequently brought before the magistrate for disputes with their mistress. They were charged with abusing their mistress, refusing to work for her, physically threatening their mistress, and wearing their mistress's clothing. The task of employing and disciplining female convicts was clearly challenging for many colonial gentlewomen. As Davidoff and Hall point out, it was the role of the mistress to be firm with servants, yet the qualities needed were the opposite of feminine softness, gentleness, and submission of self which society demanded.¹⁹

Small households contained no hierarchy of servants to provide a buffer between mistress and assigned servant. Some mistresses may have been unfamiliar with the ways of handling servants and that unfamiliarity could create not only unease with their charges but provide opportunities for rebellion. It was not only elite families which relied on female servants. Women were also assigned to more modest households which could belong to working class settlers who shared a common background with their assigned servant. When the mistress aspired to a new level of middle-class respectability her attempts could well have been thwarted by astute female servants who refused to play their role in that evolution. Perhaps that conundrum contributed to some of the fiery exchanges which took place between mistress and maid in Van Diemen's Land.

Observations on the relationship between colonial mistresses and servants who had previously been identified as prostitutes are based on the offence records within the CON40 series for the 1,779 women identified as prostitutes. Records of 279 women show that they were either charged by, or committed an offence directly affecting their mistress. These yielded 327 actual charges since some women recorded multiple charges while assigned to different mistresses. The most common was that of being insolent to her mistress at 39.3 per cent. (Table 7.2 below) The wording of the charge was largely dependent on the clerk, magistrate or the person who brought the charge

¹⁹ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850* (London, 1987), p. 395.

and judging by the varying degrees of punishment, it could cover a wide range of behaviours.

Table 7.2: Charges made by mistresses against female convicts who were identified as prostitutes

Nature of charges involving mistress	% of charges Involving mistresses
Insolence to mistress	39.3
Absconding/absent from mistress	18.0
Improper/obscene language to mistress	9.8
Refusal to work or disobedience	7.9
Assault on mistress	4.3
Drunk	4.3
Theft from mistress	3.4
Clothing related	2.1
Threatening mistress	1.8
Combined miscellaneous charges	9.1
	100

Source: TAHO CON40

Mary Ann Forrest was sentenced to six months in the Criminal Class for insolence to her mistress Mrs Shacklock.²⁰ When she repeated her insolence to her next mistress Mrs Campbell, she received six nights in a cell. In Mrs Smith's service Mary Ann earned the same charge and was imprisoned and given two months of hard labour in the Female Factory. Yet Mary Sawyer, who was found guilty of insolence to her mistress Mrs Atkinson, was merely placed in the assignable class.²¹ The following year, Mary was charged with insolence to her new mistress Mrs Olding. Mary's defiance of female authority continued unabated for she was next charged with insolence to Mrs Nicholls.

According to her CON40 record, Jane Winter was frequently insolent to her mistresses. She was first assigned to Mrs Cox, in whose service she combined insolence, disobedience and refusal to do the washing.²² Her next assignment to the Marzetti

²⁰ TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary Ann Forrest (92F) per *America* (1831), image 186.

²¹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Mary Sawyer (121S) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 61.

²² Jane was first assigned to Mrs Cox, wife of J E Cox who by 1834 had taken over Cornwall Hotel Launceston and ran a coaching service from Launceston to Hobart. Jane was charged three times while in service of the Cox family.

family was marked by charges of insolence, disobedience of orders and making use of improper language to her mistress.²³

Mary Layton was another servant who was frequently brought before the magistrate by her mistress.²⁴ In 1828 she was charged with insolence to Mrs Ramus. Her next mistress Mrs Coppin permitted Mary to leave her service and visit disorderly houses which may have promoted a more harmonious relationship, but caused the Principal Superintendant to reassign Mary 'up the country full fifty miles from Hobart Town.' Mary appears to have found the country sojourn not to her liking as she was soon charged with insolence to her mistress Mrs Dixon by persistently coming to town contrary to Mrs Dixon's orders. In 1833 she was assigned to Mrs Maria Lord, who was no more successful in controlling her defiant servant, whom she charged with being drunk, neglecting her duty and constantly going out without leave.

Punishment was sometimes ineffective. Two months after arriving on the *Persian*, Mary Ann Reynolds was charged with being drunk and insolent to her mistress Mrs Thompson.²⁵ Among her punishments she was ordered to have her head shaved. On returning to the same service she repeated her insolence and used indecent language in the presence of her mistress. Again Mary Ann had her head shaved. Her subsequent mistresses Mrs Roberts and Mrs Foyle were equally unsuccessful mentors for she absconded or was absent from the service of both women.

Sarah Norman could be described as habitually insolent. She had barely entered service when she was insolent to Mrs Morris. The same charges followed in the service of Mrs Josephs, Mrs Dumas, Mrs Milton, Mrs Carter and Mrs Roper.²⁶ Catherine Mack must have resented the charge brought against her by her mistress for she received additional punishment for making use of 'indelicate expressions' to Mrs Oakley when leaving the office of the Principal Superintendant.²⁷

Eighteen per cent of the total charges brought by mistresses were for being absent or absconding. In some cases it was a snatched opportunity. An errand to deliver a note

²³ Alison Alexander (ed.), *The Companion to Tasmanian History* (Hobart, 2005), p. 192: Thomas Marzetti emigrated from England to Ouse with his family in 1824.

²⁴ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Layton (55L) per *Sir Charles Forbes* (1827), image 308.

²⁵ TAHO CON40/1/7, Mary Ann Reynolds (56R) per *Persian* (1827), image 264.

²⁶ TAHO CON40/1/7, Sarah Norman (33N) per *Mary* (1831), image 129.

²⁷ TAHO CON40/1/7, Catherine Mack (88M) per *Harmony* (1829), image 46.

was too great a temptation for Maria Jones who ignored her mistress's instructions and was found late at night in a corn field.²⁸ Emma Lloyd took advantage of her mistress's illness to cover her absence from the house.²⁹ But when she faced the Principal Superintendant she brazenly admitted that she had prostituted herself to buy clothes.

Another who felt little sympathy for her ailing mistress was Jane Beavens who absented herself while Mrs Henry was 'laying ill in the house.'³⁰ Mrs Henry fared no better with her next assigned servant Mary McGregor. Her health deteriorated to such a degree that Mary was charged with 'absenting herself from her service at a time when her mistress was just dead.'³¹ Not only were these offences within the Convict Department, but an affront to the ideal of domestic harmony, and at odds with the feminine role of care and nurturing. Emma Littlewood showed little remorse when charged with being absent when her mistress Mrs Roberts was 'lying on a bed of Sickness.'³² Two years later she was punished for being absent when another mistress, Mrs Ferguson, was lying on her death bed.³³

These incidents highlight the vulnerability of many colonial women and their dependence upon other women. Absences could therefore be viewed as a failure on the part of the convict servant to respect that dependence. Childbirth was a dangerous and frightening time and Mrs Bell probably felt that vulnerability when she charged her servant Ann Murrell with being useless, unable to do any household work and ill-calculated to attend her during her approaching confinement.³⁴ The value which must have been placed on skilled attendants at such times would explain the blank space on the appropriation record for Susan Bisset who arrived on the *Edward*.³⁵ Her description list claimed that she was a midwife while her appropriation record went further to

²⁸ TAHO CON40/1/6, Maria Jones (156J) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 122.

²⁹ TAHO CON40/1/5, Emma Lloyd (102L) per *America* (1831), image 331.

³⁰ TAHO CON40/1/1, Jane Beavens (187B) per *America* (1831), image 158.

³¹ TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary McGregor (106G) per *Mary* (1831), image 263.

³² TAHO CON40/1/5, Emma Littlewood (110L) per *Mary* (1831), image 335.

³³ TAHO RGD34/1/1 Register-General's Department, Register of Burials in Tasmania (3376), Elizabeth Ferguson, 21 March 1834, Hobart.

³⁴ TAHO CON40/1/7, Ann Murrell (140M) per *America* (1831), image 72.

³⁵ TAHO CON40/1/1, Susan Bissett (285B) per *Edward* (1834), 207.

describe her as a ‘nurse, accustomed to attend Ladies in Confinement.’³⁶ Susan would almost certainly have been reserved for specific assignment.³⁷

Alcohol was often the catalyst for the charge of ‘improper language’. The precise definition of the term is unclear in spite of the fact that it was cited in 9.8 per cent of charges against women. While assigned to Dr Ross, Harriet Taylor was charged with being drunk and making use of improper language to her mistress.³⁸ The following year, her new mistress Mrs Earle confronted the Principal Superintendent of Convicts to accuse Harriet of living in a state of adultery with Mr Earle, and of having a child by him. The charge was dismissed by the Magistrate Thomas Anstey as unfounded and the complainant, Mrs Earle was discredited as a woman of most abandoned profligacy. Such a household would have little to recommend it as Governor Arthur’s moral exemplar.

Assault upon mistresses accounted for 4.3 per cent of all cases, and threats of violence for a further 1.8 per cent of the charges which mistresses brought against female servants who were formerly identified as prostitutes. Again, the actual term ‘assault’ probably covered a wide range of behaviours. Sarah Bennett was given three months in solitary confinement for ‘insubordination in knocking down her mistress.’³⁹ Her shipmate Eliza Smith also struck her mistress Mrs Reed.⁴⁰ Mary Ann Gratland commenced her assignment by being insolent to her mistress, but as her career progressed her tolerance levels appeared to decrease until she appeared before the Hobart Quarter Sessions for wounding her mistress Mrs Ratcliffe in the head with a stone.⁴¹ Alcohol seemed to be responsible for Mary Lamb violently assaulting her

³⁶ TAHO CON27/1/1, Appropriation list for the *Edward* (Susan Bissett); TAHO CON19/1/12, Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853 (*Edward*).

³⁷ Susan Blisset was 50 years of age when transported for receiving stolen goods. While not part of this database as she was not identified as a prostitute, she was accused of keeping a disorderly house in Devon where she was tried. Her daughter was transported with her. Susan’s record is blameless, no offences were recorded and within 3 years she received a ticket of leave and ten years later she married James Benson 25 years her junior.

³⁸ TAHO CON40/1/9, Harriet Taylor (70T) per *Mellish* (1830), image 185.

³⁹ TAHO CON40/1/1, Sarah Bennett (194B) per *America* (1831), image 161.

⁴⁰ TAHO CON40/1/9, Eliza Smith (195S) per *America* (1831), image 98.

⁴¹ TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary Ann Gratland (48G) per *Henry* (1825), image 234.

mistress Mrs Howe. Mary's punishment was severe as she spent the next twelve months in the Criminal Class at the Female House of Correction.⁴²

While alcohol was frequently linked with rebellious behaviour, the household laundry provoked many disputes when servants refused to perform this chore. Jane Winter was one who simply refused to do the washing for her mistress's household, while Betsy Inchbold was given three months at the wash tub for 'positively refusing to wash some blinds when desired.'⁴³ No such confrontation was attached to Ellen Carter's service. She effectively dealt with this onerous task by sending her mistress's laundry out to be done.⁴⁴

Some women's efforts at the washtub failed to reach the standard required by fastidious mistresses. Ann Smith was guilty of carelessness in her washing, for which the Principal Superintendant sentenced her to one month at an alternative wash tub, in the Female House of Correction.⁴⁵ Jane Keith had difficulty handling the same chore so she was sentenced to hard labour at the wash tub until she proved capable of washing for a family, practice being the cure for her inadequacy.⁴⁶

When Ann Murrell was reprimanded for being out after hours, she refused to return to her service with the Morgan family. The Principal Superintendent therefore ordered her to be kept at the wash tub until she chose to go back.⁴⁷ It is unclear exactly which mode of service was expected of Ann Bowen but when, three years after arriving in the colony, she committed her first offence she was given ten days in a cell on bread and water then placed at the wash tub until she reported herself capable of serving in a gentleman's family.⁴⁸

The regular use of the wash tub for punishment confirmed the distaste for the task. Grace Heinbury told the Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline that for women undergoing punishment, 'The work is nothing in the Factory except in the wash-

⁴² TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Lamb (64L) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 312.

⁴³ TAHO CON40/1/9, Jane Winter (180W) per *America* (1831), image 312; TAHO CON40/1/5, Betsy Inchbold (45I) per *William Bryan* (1833), image 149.

⁴⁴ TAHO CON40/1/1, Ellen Carter (173C) per *America* (1831), image 321.

⁴⁵ TAHO CON40/1/9, Ann Smith (220S) per *Hydery* (1832), image 110.

⁴⁶ TAHO CON40/1/6, Jane Keith (107K) per *Arab* (1836), image 161.

⁴⁷ TAHO CON40/1/7, Ann Murrell (140M) per *America* (1831), image 72.

⁴⁸ TAHO CON40/1/1, Ann Bowden (also Bowen) (238B) per *Hydery* (1832), image 183.

house yard'.⁴⁹ Reverend Hutchinson, Superintendent of the Female Factory, reiterated Grace's assertion that the hard labour of washing caused women to dread being sentenced to the wash house yard. But he believed that it taught them industrious and useful habits.⁵⁰ Indeed laundries were a common feature of nineteenth-century penitentiaries, Magdalen houses, prisons and poor houses where they not only helped to lessen the running costs of the institution but served the symbolic function of a daily cleansing ritual.⁵¹ That association was evident when Sir John Fielding advocated for the reform of fallen women through hard work and more particularly the establishment of a public laundry for their employment.⁵²

Just as the theft of clothing caused a high proportion of women to be transported, offence records reveal that clothing continued to be a source of discord for assigned former prostitutes in Van Diemen's Land.⁵³ Some offences involving the use of clothing may have stemmed from misunderstandings over ownership of that property. Mary Sawyer was charged with making away with a pair of shoes given to her by her mistress.⁵⁴ Perhaps a difference of opinion arose as to the ownership and right to dispose of the shoes. The term, 'making away with' was commonly used to describe the offence, and Margaret Tulford was charged with making away with or losing a morning gown given to her by her mistress Mrs Hutton.⁵⁵

The same accusation was levelled at Margaret Tracey who was found guilty of making away with a bonnet given to her by her mistress Mrs Bush. For this she was merely reprimanded. Margaret was fifty three years old and had previously been 'charged' with being useless due to old age. That and the bonnet dispute were the only misdemeanours of Margaret's career.⁵⁶ Mary Ann Roberts was charged with being absent without leave,

⁴⁹ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', pp. 303-374, evidence of Grace Heinbury.

⁵⁰ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', pp. 85-87, evidence of Reverend Hutchinson.

⁵¹ Barbara Littlewood and Linda Mahood, 'Prostitutes, Magdalenes and Wayward Girls: Dangerous Sexualities of Working Class Women in Victorian Scotland', *Gender & History*, 3 (1991), p.167.

⁵² Fergus Linnane, *London the Wicked City: A Thousand Years of Vice in the Capital* (London, 2007), p. 178.

⁵³ Deborah Oxley found that 20 per cent of the 6876 women transported to New South Wales between 1826 and 1840 stole clothing: Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 49.

⁵⁴ TAHO CON40/1/ 9, Mary Sawyer (121S) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 61.

⁵⁵ TAHO CON40/1/10, Margaret Tulford (also Fulford) (134T) per *Atwick* (1838), image 110.

⁵⁶ TAHO CON40/1/9, Margaret Tracey (64T) per *Eliza* (1830), image 182.

and clandestinely taking away her clothes.⁵⁷ In all of these cases the clothing was stated to belong to the servant yet that ownership was clearly conditional.

In other cases it is unclear who owned the disputed property. Both Mary Ann Barnard, and Mary Ann Davis were charged with being absent and taking with them property and articles of apparel, without their mistresses permission.⁵⁸ Since the theft of boots had brought Davis to Van Diemen's Land her latest purloining of apparel may have seemed alarmingly similar. Ownership was not in dispute in Elizabeth Paton's case. She was charged with stealing a black figured veil, the property of her master Mr Olding. The charge was dismissed there being no 'felonious intent'.⁵⁹ Nor was there any question of the ownership of Mrs Harrison's clothing. Peter Harrison of Jericho charged his assigned servant Sarah Forward with repeatedly wearing Mrs Harrison's clothes.⁶⁰ Similarly Mary Cuttle was charged with wearing her mistress, Mrs Rowland's jewellery.⁶¹ And when Catherine O'Brien absented herself from her service all night it was discovered that she was also 'improperly wearing her mistress's clothes.'⁶²

In Britain, female servants frequently received discarded clothing from their mistress; it was considered to be one of the perquisites or 'vails' of the job. And since colonial masters were expected to clothe their assigned servants it followed that this custom would continue in Van Diemen's Land. Uniforms were not worn by servants until the middle of the nineteenth century but if a servant chose to wear donated clothing during their working day it could contravene an axiom that servants should dress as plainly as possible.⁶³ Backhouse and Walker reported that some female convicts received a clothing allowance but in their opinion it was improperly spent. What the Quakers

⁵⁷ TAHO CON40/1/8, Mary Ann Roberts (254R) per *Emma Eugenia* (1842), image 217.

⁵⁸ TAHO CON40/1/2, Mary Ann Barnard (386B) per *Atwick* (1838), image 51; TAHO CON40/1/4, Mary Ann Davis (236D) per *Hindustan* (1839), image 24.

⁵⁹ TAHO CON40/1/7, Elizabeth Paton (79P) per *America* (1831), image 202.

⁶⁰ TAHO CON40/1/3, Sarah Forward (52F) per *Sir Charles Forbes* (1827), image 166; Peter Harrison was the licensee of the *New Inn* at Jericho: Royal Society Collection, *The Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1831 with Embellishments* (Hobart Town, 1831 [James Ross]), p. 199.

⁶¹ TAHO CON40/1/1, Mary Cuttle (97C) per *Persian* (1827), image 279.

⁶² TAHO CON40/1/2, Catherine O'Brien (364B) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 44.

⁶³ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 392.

considered to be injudicious choices on the part of the women saw them dressing in a manner which was ‘frequently unbecoming their station.’⁶⁴

James Miller had warned women that the pursuit of ‘fine dress’ was a path to damnation — words which embodied a wider concern with the supposed relationship between clothing and character.⁶⁵ Many in the nineteenth century saw clothing as physical indicators of sexual reputation.⁶⁶ No doubt some of these elements underlined judgements about appropriate clothing, and differing opinions on the subject contributed to the disharmony between servant and mistress in Van Diemen's Land. Conflict over clothing was complex because wearing apparel represented those abstract concepts of character and reputation, but it also overlapped with other more concrete issues. When disposed of for money, it could fund the purchase of grog. The possession of clothing was also frequently associated with an absence or absconding which was a separate and serious offence. Many convict women ‘dressed up’ before they left the mistress’s house without permission. There was a final argument which stressed the benevolence of the gift of clothing and the assumption that such generosity should be matched by a reciprocal offering in the form of gratitude and deference.

Yet assignment did not always mean friction between a mistress and her convict servant. If both sprung from common backgrounds, camaraderie could exist and even override their unequal circumstances. In spite of Governor Arthur’s efforts to assign women to respectable free settlers, emancipist households did receive assigned servants. In 1843 Governor Franklin explained that, ‘Since the abandonment of free grants of land and the establishment of the younger Australian colonies, few respectable capitalists have arrived in this colony.’⁶⁷ Hence the market for convict labour was often filled by emancipated convicts.⁶⁸ Sarah Taylor held a ticket-of-leave and was married to

⁶⁴ James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies* (New York, 1967 [London, 1843]), Appendix F. ‘Report upon the State of the Prisoners in Van Diemen's Land, with Remarks upon the Penal Discipline, and Observations on the General State of the Colony in 1834’, p. lviii.

⁶⁵ James Miller, *Prostitution Considered in Relation to its Cause and Cure* (Edinburgh, 1859 [Original in the British Library, reproduced as part of the Nineteenth Century Microfiche Programme]), pp. 17-18.

⁶⁶ Laura Gowing, ‘Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London’, *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 35 (1993), p. 10.

⁶⁷ Sir John Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin on Female Convicts, Van Diemen's Land M DCCC XLIII Addressed to the Secretary of State, Lord Stanley, 4 June 1843*, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁸ Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin*, p. 19.

free settler James Walker which qualified her to receive an assigned servant.⁶⁹ Mistress and servant had not only been identified as prostitutes before their transportation, but they continued to share common interests since Sarah was charged with being at the theatre in company with her assigned servant.⁷⁰ And since her assigned servant was fellow *Hydery* shipmate Jane Bell, there is more than a hint that the two women used assignment as a means of cementing an existing friendship.⁷¹

Lydia Chandler was another who enjoyed a close familiarity with her mistress which was revealed when she was charged with being on the streets at an unreasonable hour at night. Both she and her mistress were at the time intoxicated.⁷² Lydia's appropriation record showed that her mistress was Mrs Goodwin who was married to Goodwin, the shoemaker in Barrack Street, Hobart Town.⁷³ Mary Haigh quarrelled with her mistress who was a 'prisoner holding no indulgence.' Mary explained that she was treated as an equal and indeed they were charged jointly with causing a disturbance in a public house.⁷⁴

In their examination of convicts who arrived in New South Wales on the *Eleanor*, David Kent and Norma Townsend found that there was an erroneous perception that prisoners fared better if assigned to ex-convicts.⁷⁵ Alexander Harris expounded on the subject when he compared the treatment which assigned servants received from emancipists and free settlers. In his opinion, capriciousness and terror typified the rule of the free settler who would not trust his servants out of his sight. This was contrasted

⁶⁹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Sarah Taylor (87T) per *Hydery* (1832), image 194; TAHO CON 52/1/21, Index to Convict Applications for Permission to Marry (1829-1857), Sarah Taylor and James Walker, free, 1837; TAHO RGD36/1/3 Register-General's Department, Marriage Register (3635), Sarah Taylor to James Walker, Hobart, 1837.

⁷⁰ While no address is given it could have been the *The Victoria* or *The Royal Victoria*, later called the *Theatre Royal* in Campbell Street which was begun in 1834 and opened in 1837. The site of the Argyle Rooms was also turned into a theatre. The *Albert Theatre* was in Liverpool St near the Argyle Street intersection as described by Richard Ely, 'Sights and Sounds of Hobart During the 1860s and 1870s: a Townsman Remembers', *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2002), p. 72.

⁷¹ TAHO CON40/1/1, Jane Bell (240B) per *Hydery* (1832), image 184.

⁷² TAHO CON40/1/1, Lydia Chandler (106C) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 283.

⁷³ Royal Society Collection, *Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1831*, p. 66. The Goodwin residence was at 9 Barrack Street Hobart, and he ran his shoemaking business at 16 Liverpool Street Hobart.

⁷⁴ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', pp. 70-71, evidence of Mary Haig.

⁷⁵ David Kent and Norma Townsend, *Convicts of the Eleanor: protest in Rural England, new lives in Australia* (London, 2002), p. 195.

to a willing obedience which was offered to the emancipist master. That relationship was founded on respect for the fairness and judgement of the emancipist master.⁷⁶ While cases exist where women enjoyed a companionable relationship with an emancipist mistress, Harris's convict narrative may have painted an overly romanticised picture. Ex-convict Maria Lord was happy to charge her assigned servant Mary Layton with being drunk, neglecting her duty and constantly going out without leave.⁷⁷ She similarly charged Ellen Gurney with using gross and indecent language.⁷⁸

Governor Arthur and his contemporaries were doubtless more comfortable when a master was in control of the household, yet it is clear that colonial mistresses played a significant role in the assignment of women labelled as prostitutes. The CON40 records speak mainly of discord between the two classes of women. Of co-operation and mutual support less is known. There must have been moments of teamwork and collaboration when they nursed sick family members or the mistress supervised the preserving of food or repairs to household linen and clothing. Yet offence records show that when mistress and servant were compatibly engaged it was only for the enjoyment of illicit recreation and leisure activities. Moments of leisure were rare for women under sentence, and that aspect of their assignment is only revealed through the charges which women incurred in pursuit of that leisure.

Leisure during assignment

The nature of assignment for most women meant domestic isolation. Their time was owned by the master or mistress, and few opportunities existed for approved recreation. Daniels observed that, 'when the routine tasks were completed other activities (like minding property and children) continued.'⁷⁹ Thus leisure time was precious and rare. The conscientious clerks of Van Diemen's Land, in documenting colonial offences also

⁷⁶ Alexander Harris, *Settlers and Convicts or Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian Backwoods* (Melbourne, 1964 [London, 1847]), p.68.

⁷⁷ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Layton (55L) per *Sir Charles Forbes* (1827), image 308.

⁷⁸ TAHO CON40/1/3, Ellen Gurney (162G) per *Hector* (1835), image 291; Dianne Snowden, 'Lord, Maria (1780-1859)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lord-maria-13052> (13 September 2012) Maria Lord (Riseley) was transported to New South Wales in 1804 and arrived in Hobart Town in 1805 as assigned servant and later the wife of marine officer Edward Lord.

⁷⁹ Kay Daniels, *Convict Women* (Crow's Nest [New South Wales], 1998), p. 80.

provided a vivid picture of leisure activities, which were by definition illegal activities. From those offence records it is evident that the threat of punishment was insufficient to deter women from seeking out entertainment.

Engels believed that the only two pleasures left to the English working class were liquor and sexual intercourse, both of which women in this study pursued with a passion.⁸⁰ Many women identified as prostitutes were from urban areas and were familiar with the conviviality of inns and pubs and the alehouse. Trial reports and statements from the women on arrival gave numerous accounts of them frequenting public houses and meeting their customers before retiring to a room in a lodging house. Women from rural backgrounds would have experienced similar camaraderie of ale houses and coaching inns or the annual calendar of festivals and country fairs.⁸¹

While it is evident that liquor and sex were indeed popular, it is clear that women in Van Diemen's Land found infinitely more means of distraction than Engels would allow. They frequented racetracks, regattas, theatres, and public and private houses. Many may have done so to meet customers. They may alternatively have sought the company of those who shared accents or songs with which they were familiar, or who played card games and dice while relating news of kinfolk and sharing reminiscences of the old country. Once again these occasions were often revealed through conflict between servant and master or mistress. They became public when women illegally absented themselves to participate in such activities or otherwise excited the ire of their superiors.

In 1838 members of the Van Diemen's Land Legislative Council attempted to move a clause in the Police Act making it unlawful for any person to play at any game within the limits of any town upon the Sabbath Day.⁸² Captain Swanston and Mr Forster regretted that no regulation existed to prevent Sunday being thus profaned. His Excellency Sir John Franklin described a disgraceful scene which he had witnessed whereby two boys were playing marbles on the Domain on Sunday. When he

⁸⁰ Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Translated and edited by W O Henderson and W H Chaloner) (Oxford, 1958 [Barmen, 1845]), p. 144.

⁸¹ For discussion on country fairs and festivals which were enjoyed by English workers in the early nineteenth century see Ben Wilson, *The Making of Victorian Values: Decency and Dissent in Britain – 1789-1837* (New York, 2007), pp. 330-333.

⁸² *Hobart Town Courier*, 2 November 1838.

expostulated with them on the impropriety of their conduct they said that they had often done so. Chief Justice Pedder provided a more liberal approach when he advocated giving every possible means of recreation to the 'lower orders' on a Sunday. Mr Forster however could never admit the principle of Sunday being a day for amusement. 'What could be more offensive', he asked, 'than to see a parcel of dirty boys and girls playing at marbles and ball on a Sunday?'⁸³ The motion failed, yet the Council's deliberations serve as a reminder of how assiduously the middle class sought to impose its standards upon the community. It also revealed the mindset of the men who charged and sentenced female convicts. The leisure activities in which assigned women indulged must have seemed truly heinous if small boys playing marbles were so harshly judged.

By examining the absences of women labelled as prostitutes it is possible to translate them into a picture of how the women sought companionship and entertainment away from the confines of domestic service. While some government clerks were punctilious in recording details of women's offences, some were even more fastidious in that they noted the day of the week on which many offences, particularly absences occurred. Using the database of sixteen ships from the three decades, the records of 686 women who were identified as prostitutes were examined. Specific days were mentioned in 108 charges. But it was absences which caused the authorities to most often record a particular day so a further analysis was done to calculate the days on which women were most likely to be absent from their service. Sunday was by far the most popular day at 39.4 per cent, Monday followed at 19.7 per cent and Saturday at 15.2 per cent.⁸⁴ Those absences were frequently linked to leisure pursuits. (Table 7.3 below)

⁸³ *Hobart Town Courier*, 2 November 1838.

⁸⁴ This uses the database of sixteen ships noted in Appendix K: List of ships used to examine assignment patterns. It includes 686 records of women identified as prostitutes. It is less likely that the record would name the day by the early 1840s and more likely in late 1820s.

Table 7.3: **Days on which absences occurred by percentage of total named days**

Sunday	39.4
Monday	19.7
Saturday	15.2
Tuesday	10.6
Wednesday	7.6
Thursday	4.5
Friday	<u>3.0</u>
	100

Source: TAHO CON40 (687 records)

In their previous life it may have been the custom for the women to down tools on the Sabbath, attend divine worship, or relax and visit family or friends. It was considered to be the day of rest. But women assigned to domestic service found no such relief. Children still had to be tended, and families fed and waited upon. So women may have felt justified in taking that day off. Sunday absences might have more readily been reported as an additional defilement of the Sabbath. Although the Legislative Council failed to pass its amendment, the sanctity of Sunday was already enshrined in colonial regulations. The keeper of a licensed public house, who allowed prisoners to drink or gamble without their master's or mistress' permission, was fined between four and twenty dollars for such indulgence. If it occurred in a private house the fine was doubled and if on a Sunday it was increased to fifty dollars.⁸⁵ In 1834 Ann Morrissey was fined five pounds and costs, for not keeping the outer door of her public house closed on the Lord's Day.⁸⁶

Absences may also have been more frequent on a Sunday because it was a day which offered more opportunities for escape. Offence records show that women who were granted leave to attend church seized the chance to catch up with friends or visit a public house. Both Eliza Smith and Catherine Owens were in the service of Mr Giblin in May 1833 when they were given permission to attend church.⁸⁷ They were

⁸⁵ Allport Library and Museum of Fine Art, *Tasmanian Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1826*, p.77. The use of both dollars and pounds appears to be commonplace in the early nineteenth-century in Van Diemen's Land.

⁸⁶ *Colonial Times*, 28 January 1834, p. 7.

⁸⁷ TAHO CON40/1/9, Eliza Smith (120S) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 60; TAHO CON40/1/7, Catherine Owens (8O) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 152.

subsequently charged with being absent from their service.⁸⁸ Rebecca Wheeler took a further liberty when she was charged with not returning to her master Mr Emmett's house after leaving church.⁸⁹ She remained absent all night then returned the following day drunk. Ellen Connelan managed to return home at midnight, but was charged with being absent on Sunday, and drunk and riotous on her return.⁹⁰ Mary Carr surpassed all her sisters in crime when she was charged with being in a common brothel during divine service on Sunday.⁹¹ Apart from the opportunities which church attendance provided, the family was often absent on Sunday leaving servants unsupervised. Margaret Kidson and Rebecca Wheeler were twice charged with being absent on a Sunday.⁹² Women were more often charged with being drunk on a Saturday so another explanation for Sunday absences could be the after effects of Saturday's carousing.

The 19.7 per cent of absences on a Monday could possibly be linked to Sunday night revels which stretched into Monday. This figure does not include cases where the record stated that a woman was absent on Sunday and Monday, but when only the Monday is mentioned. A high number of Monday absences could also reflect the chores which were to be undertaken that day. Monday was traditionally a washday and this has proven to be an undesirable activity. In the industrial areas of England such as Sheffield and Birmingham it was also a day for 'irregularity and insobriety' in the guise of Saint Monday.⁹³ This day was a popular holiday among the labouring classes, and according to Douglas Reid, dog fights, cock fighting and the ale house were popular attractions on Saint Monday.⁹⁴ Clearly its traditions were retained by the transported labour force, for

⁸⁸ *Historical Records of Australia. Series 111, Despatches and Papers Relating to the Settlement of the States*, vol. 5, Frederick Watson (ed.) (Sydney, 1922), pp. 324, 481. Thomas Giblin arrived in Van Diemen's Land on the *Sir Charles Forbes* in 1827 with letters of recommendation from Under Secretary Hay to Governor Arthur. He was employed as a clerk in the Van Diemen's Land Bank and ran the New Town Academy and Boarding School: Jeanette E. Hyland, *Maids, Masters and Magistrates: Twenty women of the convict ship New Grove: Maidservants in Van Diemen's Land* (Hobart, 2007), p. 189.

⁸⁹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Rebecca Wheeler (130W) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 287.

⁹⁰ TAHO CON40/1/1, Ellen Connelan (210C) per *Frances Charlotte* (1833), 339.

⁹¹ TAHO CON40/1/2, Mary Carr (545C) per *Waverley* (1842), image 237.

⁹² TAHO CON40/1/5, Margaret Heling (124H) per *Harmony* (1829), image 66; TAHO CON40/1/5, Margaret Kidston (61K) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 255; TAHO CON40/1/9, Rebecca Wheeler (130W) per *Lady of the Lake* (1829), image 287.

⁹³ Douglas Reid, 'The Decline of Saint Monday', *Past and Present*, no. 71 (May, 1976), p. 81.

⁹⁴ Reid, 'The Decline of Saint Monday', p. 80.

not only assigned women, but convict mechanics in Van Diemen's Land were also noted for their Monday absences.⁹⁵

It was not only absences on a Sunday which incurred punishment, and again the diligence of clerks has provided specific details of other methods by which women erred on the Sabbath. On Sunday evening, Sarah Young was found coming out of the *Ship Inn* with a bottle of rum.⁹⁶ Elizabeth Lewis and Mary Mc Loughlan spent their illicit leisure hours together and were charged with drinking in a public house with sailors on Sunday night.⁹⁷ Although Emma Farrow was a married woman, she received six months in the Crime Class for entertaining a party of men in her house on Sunday where liquor and cards were found on the table.⁹⁸ It was also a Sunday when Margaret Lowry admitted a man into her master's house and entertained him in her bed.⁹⁹

Margaret's guilt was apparent but Hannah Clewlow's case was more ambiguous.¹⁰⁰ She spent more than three years assigned to the Hoskisson family, but in February 1830 she was returned to the House of Correction for assignment in the country on the advice of District Constable Swift. Swift claimed that her master Mr Hoskisson kept a disorderly house. Her removal was unsuccessful because nine months later she was still with the Hoskissons when charged with being in a house of ill-fame on Sunday. Mr Hoskisson intervened on her behalf by stating that he had given her permission to walk out with the children. He seemed unconcerned about the offence and it raises the question as to her role within the household and exactly what her employment entailed.

Two years after Sarah Cross arrived in the colony, she was assigned to the Asquith family where she recorded her only colonial offence of being in bed with Henry Walker 'free' on Sunday night. She was harshly sentenced to two years in the Female House of Correction. There may have been unrecorded circumstances which earned her such

⁹⁵ Maxwell-Stewart, 'The Bushrangers and the Convict System of Van Diemen's Land', p. 115.

⁹⁶ TAHO CON 40/1/10, Sarah Young (10Y) per *Arab* (1836), image 252; The *Ship Inn* was at 5 Elizabeth Street, licensees Wise and Day: Royal Society Collection, *Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1831*, p. 66.

⁹⁷ TAHO CON40/1/6, Elizabeth Lewis (212L) per *Navarino* (1841), image 227, and TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Mc Loughlan (219L) per *Mary Anne* (1841), image 229. Both were charged on the 16 December 1844. These two are examples from a time when it was less common to mention the day. In this case it may have been the immorality of such behaviour on the Sabbath which prompted the mention.

⁹⁸ TAHO CON40/1/3, Emma Farrow (51F) per *Sir Charles Forbes* (1827), image 166.

⁹⁹ TAHO CON40/1/5, Margaret Lowry (62L) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 311.

¹⁰⁰ TAHO CON40/1/1, Hannah Clewlow (130C) per *Harmony* (1829), image 299.

severe treatment or magistrate Captain Frederick Forth may have shared the Legislative Councillors' strict views on the Sabbath.¹⁰¹

The likelihood of such detail being included on women's records decreased over time until the 1840s when fewer references were made to specific days. When official records failed to provide the detail, the colonial press often filled the void. The *Colonial Times* of 10 March 1840 in its salacious account of activities within the Hobart Town Female Factory observed that members of the 'Flash Mob' when not in the Factory could be found in the Garrison Canteen of a Sunday afternoon and the Military Barracks of a Sunday night where 'comfortable quarters may be procured until the morning.'¹⁰²

But whatever the day of the week or the inclination or not of colonial authorities to record those details, it is apparent that women availed themselves of any opportunity to enjoy convivial company and to visit prohibited premises. And many men who shared a bed with female convicts found themselves named in the charges. When Susan Corfield was charged by her master Captain Bell with absconding it provided a snapshot into some personalities living in Hobart Town in 1829. Susan was apprehended by Constable Peel in the house of William Cowley in the Brickfield.¹⁰³ The cast list expanded when it was revealed that she was in bed with Mr Read, clerk to Mr Underwood.¹⁰⁴

Sarah Owens' record contained references to her friends as well as an insight into the expansion of Hobart Town in 1829. After absconding from Mr Morrison she was discovered by Constable Byron in the Stables at the New Lumber Yard, with a man named Ling who ran the stables. Sarah later absconded from another master Mr McCormack, and after three weeks was apprehended by Constable Edgar in a hut three miles from Kangaroo Point with Jonathan Nicholls.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹TAHO CON40/1/1, Sarah Cross (190C) per *Hydery* (1832), image 329.

¹⁰² *Colonial Times* quoted in, Franklin, *A Confidential Despatch from Sir John Franklin*, p. 62.

¹⁰³TAHO CON40/1/1, Susan Corfield (53C) per *Mary* (1823), image 261.

¹⁰⁴ *Historical Records of Australia, Series 111, Despatches and Papers Relating to the Settlement of the States*, vol. 4 (Sydney, 1921), pp. 532-533, John Christopher Underwood was one of petitioners for Charter for Bank of Van Diemen's Land.

¹⁰⁵TAHO CON40/1/7, Sarah Owens (6O) per *Mermaid* (1828).

Mary Penfold was apprehended by Constable Hanston in Jonathan Martin's house. After punishment, she was reassigned, but was again found in Martin's house.¹⁰⁶ A John Martin owned licensed premises in Argyle Street in 1826 so that may explain the attraction.¹⁰⁷ Eleven years later Ann Dickenson was charged with dancing in John Martin's house the previous night.¹⁰⁸ It was clearly a venue where people met to enjoy themselves.¹⁰⁹ Such venues were often described in conduct records as disorderly houses and were operated by people such as, Allison, Judith Fenton, Stockers, Hannah Miles and Edward Spring.¹¹⁰

The racecourse or the races, proved to be another favourite destination for women who absented themselves from their service. After 1825 racecourses were established at Sandy Bay, New Town, Ross, Richmond and Launceston. The course at New Town was noteworthy for its mention by David Burn who travelled in Van Diemen's Land during the 1830s. It existed side by side with the 'elegant and picturesque villas'.¹¹¹ In 1826 the newly formed Tasmanian Turf Club paid Governor Arthur the compliment of asking him to become its patron, an offer which he declined. Arthur explained that whenever large numbers of people assembled for the purposes of amusement, 'great irregularities' and even 'serious Offences' were the inevitable result.¹¹² Given the nature of the colony, such gatherings would be even more likely to lead to crime and for that reason his sanction was withheld. Little wonder that authorities took a dim view of female convicts visiting such gatherings. Governor Arthur's fears were realised in 1842 when Margaret McKenzie was found in a hut at the race track with five men.¹¹³ Catherine Green was apprehended at the racecourse where she was also found to be dancing in a

¹⁰⁶ TAHO CON40/1/7, Mary Penfold (56P) per *Mermaid* (1828).

¹⁰⁷ Allport Library and Museum of Fine Art, *Tasmanian Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1826*, p. 69.

¹⁰⁸ TAHO CON40/1/3, Ann Dickenson (175D) per *New Grove* (1835), image 94.

¹⁰⁹ Royal Society Collection, *Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1831*, p. 66. In 1831 Martin owned the *Spirit Vaults* at 10 Liverpool St, Hobart Town. For a discussion on disorderly houses see chapter 8.

¹¹⁰ Royal Society Collection, *Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1831*, p. 65, Stockers were licensees of the *Derwent Hotel*, 1 Elizabeth Street, Hobart Town.

¹¹¹ David Burn, *A Picture of Van Diemen's Land* (Hobart, 1973 [first published as, 'Van Diemen's Land', in *The Colonial Magazine* of 1840-1841]), p. 54.

¹¹² Eustace FitzSymonds (ed.), *A Looking-Glass for Tasmania: Letters, Petitions and Other Manuscripts Relating to Van Diemen's Land 1808-1845 Transcribed by Eustace FitzSymonds and with a Number of Original Leaves Reproduced* (Sullivan's Cove, 1980), p. 85, citing CSO1/651/14628.

¹¹³ TAHO CON40/1/6, Margaret McKenzie (137K) per *Gilbert Henderson* (1840), image 169.

booth. It was her only recorded offence.¹¹⁴ Both Maria Johnson and Bridget Quin were detained at the racecourse and charged with misconduct.¹¹⁵

The Regatta which was originally called the First Anniversary Regatta was held on the Derwent foreshore in 1838, after which the area called the Regatta Ground became a recognised site. It soon earned a reputation as a place of debauchery and was pronounced ‘off limits’ to the convict population. This ruling was apparent when Margaret Scullion was charged with being on the Regatta Ground contrary to Regulations.¹¹⁶ In 1841 both Mary Cartmell and Rachael Jones were charged with being on the Regatta Ground, but Rachael was also found to be under the influence of liquor.¹¹⁷ Before the establishment of the Regatta, the area was commonly known as Pavilion Point after a pavilion was erected for Governor Arthur.¹¹⁸ It was at this spot that Mary Eastburn was discovered drinking in a booth.¹¹⁹

Assigned servants were also punished for patronising the theatre. Ann Harvey’s attendance was defined as ‘misconduct’ and being a married woman she was given fourteen days in solitary confinement then returned to her husband.¹²⁰ As was previously noted Sarah Taylor and her assigned servant Jane Bell were similarly charged. The list of public houses and inns which appeared in the offence records for this group of women is also a guide to the most popular licensed premises within the colony.¹²¹ Those which most often drew assigned women were the *Albion Public House*, the *Castle Inn/Public House*, *Clarke’s Public House*, the *Dolphin Public House*, *Makepeace’s Public House*, the *Macquarie Inn/Hotel*, the *Norwood Inn*, the *Red Lion Inn*, and by far the most regularly mentioned, *Bernard Walford’s Public House*.¹²²

¹¹⁴ TAHO CON40/1/3, Catherine Green (135G) per *William Bryan* (1833), image 278.

¹¹⁵ TAHO CON40/1/5, Maria Johnson (50J) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 184; TAHO CON40/1/8, Bridget Quin (8Q) per *Mary Anne* (1841), image 174.

¹¹⁶ TAHO CON40/1/10, Margaret Scullion (511S) per *Hope* (1842), image 75.

¹¹⁷ TAHO CON40/1/2, Mary Cartmell (303C) per *Arab* (1836), image 157; TAHO CON40/1/6, Rachael Jones (193J) per *Rajah* (1841), image 134.

¹¹⁸ Tony Rayner, ‘Derwent Foreshore Historical Walk’ (October, 1998).

¹¹⁹ TAHO CON40/1/4, Mary Eastburn (58E) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 89.

¹²⁰ TAHO CON40/1/6, Ann Harvey (317H) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 22.

¹²¹ See chapter 8.

¹²² Murray was the licensee of the *Albion Public House* at 11 Elizabeth Street, Hobart Town; the *Dolphin* was at 5 Campbell Street; *Makepeace’s Public House* was also called the *Somerset Arms* at 36 Elizabeth Street, Hobart Town; the *Macquarie* or *McQuarie Inn* was run by Cox at 18 Macquarie Street; the *Red Lion Inn* licensee was Mrs. Underwood at 44 Liverpool Street; Bernard Walford was licensee of both the *Turk’s Head Inn* at 12 Murray Street and the *King George Inn* at 4 Murray Street: Royal Society

These prohibited sites were a feature of the expanding townships and their temptations frustrated the rehabilitation of the female convict. Authorities therefore attempted to remove women from the danger which they posed.

After Mary Ann Wood arrived on the *Providence*, she moved through a number of households experiencing periods of punishment, and reassignment or return to her former service. Her offence record described stormy scenes with her mistresses and her preference to offend on a Tuesday and a Saturday. It also introduced characters who were compliant in those offences such as William King, assigned servant to Dr Ross in whose apartment she was discovered. Her next master Mr Bryant, charged Mary Ann with concealing Samuel Wilson, her fellow servant in her bed room. A government strategy had specifically sent Mary Ann to Mr Bryant's country residence. By 1831 assignment to the 'interior', the 'country' or 'a distance away from Hobart Town' was an important tactic in the reform process. In theory, a stint in the interior meant removal from inns, taverns, and dangerous companions. It separated the women from their many sites of leisure and entertainment, and the strategy was widely approved. David Burn believed that 'their habits and connexions are necessarily broken ... removed from their greatest bane and sorest temptation – *drink*.'¹²³ But while country assignment may have removed Mary Ann Wood from the grog shops of the towns, it did not protect her chastity.

When Sarah Burk was charged by her master Mr Jennings with repeated drunkenness, landowner Mr John Gage witnessed the charge. He was in need of a servant and resided at a safe distance from town. The Principal Superintendent had declared Hobart Town to be 'and [sic] improper place for her', so Sarah was despatched to Mr Gage at Gagebrook.¹²⁴ Again the strategy failed and within the fortnight Mr Gage brought his new servant before the magistrate for being drunk.¹²⁵ Louisa Cutler was another whom the Principal Superintendent disqualified from assignment in Hobart Town, and she too

Collection, *The Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1831*, pp. 64-66.

¹²³ Burn, *A Picture of Van Diemen's Land*, pp. 46-47.

¹²⁴ TAHO CON40/1/1, Sarah Burk (149B) per *Harmony* (1829), image 139.

¹²⁵ Her master was John Ogle Gage a retired army officer who arrived in the colony in 1824 and bought the property which became Gagebrook: Alison Alexander, *Brighton and Surrounds: a history of Bagdad, Bridgewater, Brighton, Broadmarsh, Dromedary, Elderslie, Mangalore, Old Beach, Pontville and Tea Tree* (Gagebrook [Tasmania], 2006), pp. 12-13; Hyland, *Maids, Masters and Magistrates*, p. 189.

was relocated to the interior.¹²⁶ Within the month she had reoffended, so new orders were issued stating that she must not be assigned within fifty miles of Hobart Town. It took only three months until she was again before the magistrate for neglecting her duty while beastly drunk. A country assignment failed to provide Louisa with the sober and chaste environment which Governor Arthur had anticipated.

It was not only the temptations of the bottle which prompted removal of prisoners to the interior. While under assignment to Mr Watchorn in Hobart Town, Margaret Jones developed an attachment to Mr George Guest's son.¹²⁷ When Margaret absconded she was apprehended in Mr Guest's house.¹²⁸ In spite of separation, their attachment endured, for six months later while assigned to Mr Bowden, Margaret was sent to Reverend Claigborne 'up the Country in consequence of a certain connection having been formed between her and young Mr Guest.'¹²⁹ But Margaret showed no sign of reform for while assigned to the reverend she left his premises, 'for the purpose of Prostitution.' A similar dalliance with the opposite sex earned Jane Parsons an assignment to the interior after she was charged with admitting a man into her bed.¹³⁰

Nonetheless, the Principal Superintendent put great faith in the steadying influence of the Claigborne household. When William Sorell brought his servant Eliza Morris up on a charge of misconduct the Principal Superintendant confined her in a cell on bread and water then placed her in the House of Correction for assignment to the Reverend Claigborne in the interior.¹³¹ Within six months it was apparent that her new assignment had been a disappointment.¹³² Eliza was no more receptive to the saintly isolation of the

¹²⁶ TAHO CON40/1/1, Louisa Cutler (103C) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 282.

¹²⁷ E R Pretymann, 'Guest, George (1767-1841)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/guest-george-2133> (21 March 2011), George Guest was a Norfolk Islander. He became a successful landowner and farmer who supported Governor Bligh during his expulsion from New South Wales. In 1825 Guest opened the *Seven Stars Inn* in Campbell Street.

¹²⁸ Royal Society Collection, *Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1831*, p. 40, Mr. George Guest resided at 2 Campbell Street, Hobart Town.

¹²⁹ TAHO CON40/1/5, Margaret Jones (45J) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 181.

¹³⁰ TAHO CON40/1/8, Jane Parsons (224P) per *Emma Eugenia* (1842), image 157.

¹³¹ R M H Garvie, 'Sorell, William (1800-1860)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sorell-william-2681> (20 February 2012) William Sorell Esquire was the son of Lieutenant-Governor William Sorell who followed his father to Hobart Town in December 1823. He received a grant of 1,000 acres in the Hamilton district and in 1828 a town allotment. It appears that Eliza was assigned to Sorell at his Hobart Town residence.

¹³² Reverend Claigborne ran a Grammar School at Longford (Norfolk Plains). His surname has numerous spellings in the CON40 offence records such as Claiburne, Claibourne, Claiburn.

Claigborne household than Margaret Jones had been. She was charged with insolence to her new master and leaving his premises without permission.

It was apparent that many of the urban temptations were easily reproduced in a rural setting, yet there remained an almost idyllic view of the country as a place devoid of temptation. While the country was not yet the pre-lapsarian Garden of Eden which it would become in the late nineteenth century, it was still idealised as a place where temptations and vice were fewer.¹³³ Not only would the criminal be reformed, but the young could be sheltered from corrupting influences. Jane Beavens was eighteen years old and assigned to Mr Henry when the Principal Superintendent determined that she was too young for service in Hobart Town and reassigned her to the interior.¹³⁴ He made the same judgement for Mary Kennedy three years later. She was to be assigned, 'a long way in the Interior being too young for Hobart Town.'¹³⁵ Assignment to the interior had a dual purpose in not only removing women from temptation but also as a weapon of punishment.

Yet it appears that many sentences for country assignment were either ignored or failed to achieve their aim. Offence records show that when some women were sentenced to the country within a few months the same sentence was re-issued. This may have meant that the sentence was not carried out because as noted earlier, the transfer of women was often difficult. One woman's record documents an impressive ability to avoid country assignment. Jane Graham was a sixteen year old when she arrived in the colony in 1833, with a reputation for a bad temper and quarrelsome disposition.¹³⁶ Within three months the Fenn Kemps had returned her to the Factory and she was recommended for country assignment. A few months passed until she was sent by her new master Mr Thorpe for further punishment followed by a new recommendation for assignment to the interior. Two months later a third master returned her to the factory and again the instruction was for assignment to the interior. Her next master was rid of her within four weeks after she refused to work or even get out of bed. This time the instructions were that her reassignment not be in Hobart Town. After two years and a return to a former long-

¹³³ Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London: Prostitution and Control in the Metropolis, 1730-1830* (Harlow, 1999), p.175.

¹³⁴ TAHO CON40/1/1, Jane Beavens (187B) per *America* (1831), image 158.

¹³⁵ TAHO CON40/1/5, Mary Kennedy (73K) per *America* (1831), image 261.

¹³⁶ TAHO CON40/1/3, Jane Graham (137G) per *William Bryan* (1833), image 279.

suffering master she was ordered to the interior yet again. Exactly five years after her arrival in the colony the Principal Superintendent ordered that Jane be 'assigned a long distance from Hobart Town.' While instructions for a country assignment finally disappeared from her conduct record she continued to defy authority for a further thirteen years. Of course an alternative reading of Jane's record could show that each sentence was carried out and that country assignment had no beneficial effect upon her.

A preference for urban regions meant a shortage of female labour in country areas, for the aversion was shared by free immigrant women who also preferred Hobart Town and Launceston. Kirsty Reid pointed out that the emigration scheme of the 1830s failed to resolve this.¹³⁷ The *True Colonist* in February 1835 lamented the acute shortage of female convict labour in rural areas and confirmed that female emigrants were unprepared to venture into those regions.¹³⁸ A country assignment was often the catalyst for women to abscond or offend in the hope of gaining a more desirable position in town.¹³⁹ This subterfuge was acknowledged by contemporary observers like David Burn who wrote that, 'many have been known purposely to commit offences in the interior, in the hope that their subsequent assignment might be to a master or mistress in town.'¹⁴⁰ Chief Police Magistrate John Price was similarly aware that once in the interior, women committed offences to be returned to Hobart Town.¹⁴¹

Even when women could be forced into the interior, removal from temptations was not guaranteed. Absences were equally common in the country regions where entertainment could always be found and agreeable company was never far away. A woman had no difficulty finding male companions or even suitors.¹⁴² On rural properties where no public houses could accommodate the revellers, the men's huts or quarters often became scenes of conviviality and carousing. Indeed, some masters were instrumental in establishing such sites. Employers of free and ticket-of-leave men in the bush were

¹³⁷ Kirsty Reid, 'Setting Women to Work: The Assignment System and Female Convict Labour in Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 34, no. 121 (2003), p. 9.

¹³⁸ *True Colonist*, February 1835, cited in Reid, 'Work Sexuality and Resistance', p. 187.

¹³⁹ Reid, 'Work, Sexuality and Resistance', p. 267.

¹⁴⁰ Burn, *A Picture of Van Diemen's Land*, p. 46.

¹⁴¹ TAHO CSO22/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-1843', p. 183, evidence of John Price.

¹⁴² Louisa Meredith, *My Home in Tasmania, During a Residence of Nine Years*, vol. 11 (Swansea, Tasmania, 2003[London 1852]), pp. 191-192. Louisa Meredith describes the stages of courtship and difficulty in retaining female servants in the country.

frequently inconvenienced when cashed up workers sought the public houses in distant towns. Prior to the Licensing Act, it was therefore common for masters to sell alcohol to their men as a means of keeping them on the property.¹⁴³ No doubt assigned women gladly shared the purchases. Catherine O'Brien did, for she was found guilty of going to the men's hut and getting drunk.¹⁴⁴

Rosetta McNeilly was said to be constantly in the men's huts, while Ann Brim waited till her family had retired then made her way to the hut of a prisoner named Gardiner. Kirsty Reid suggested that this association between male and female convicts was commonplace and she disputed the emphasis on antagonism between the sexes which preoccupied writers such as Miriam Dixson and Anne Summers. Reid believes that 'Convicts therefore transformed sites such as huts, stables, barns and other outhouses into forums for their entertainment allowing co-workers to come together to smoke, play cards and have sex.'¹⁴⁵ But as offence records show, occasions which could have qualified as working class leisure time were often perceived as vice and debauchery. The women in this study were quick to seek out male company in such places, whether for sexual commerce or not. And that pursuit further damned them in contemporary eyes.

Such exploits have become synonymous with the image of the ungovernable licentious female convict. Cultural misunderstandings, belief in the criminal class and a fiercely evangelical patrimony have all been recognised as factors in creating and perpetuating this image.¹⁴⁶ But some blame must also rest with the nature of the sources which are available to tell the women's stories. Conduct records are replete with acts of defiance but little can be expanded when a woman's record is blank.

¹⁴³ Burn, *A Picture of Van Diemen's Land*, pp.16-17.

¹⁴⁴ TAHO CON40/1/8, Rosetta McNeilly (85N) per *Garland Grove* (1841), image 105; TAHO CON40/1/1, Ann Brim (257B) per *Jane* (1833), image 193; TAHO CON 40/1/2 Catherine O'Brien (364B) per *Westmoreland* (1836).

¹⁴⁵ Reid, 'Work Sexuality and Resistance', p. 253.

¹⁴⁶ See Michael Sturma, 'Eye of the Beholder: The Stereotype of Women Convicts 1788-1852', *Labour History*, no. 34 (May, 1978).

*An improper person to be in a family with young children*¹⁴⁷

Nursemaid and self-professed prostitute Jane Dobson owned such a blank record and during her servitude incurred no offences to turn into a rollicking tale.¹⁴⁸ She was assigned to Mr Braithwaite at New Town when she arrived in 1839 and in the muster of 1841 she was still with the Braithwaite family. By 1843 she had received her ticket-of-leave, then her free certificate in 1846. Mary Ann Timbs was another nursemaid who had spent two years on the town but her colonial record was equally uneventful.¹⁴⁹ While no appropriation record survives to reveal her original master, Mary Ann was a nursemaid who arrived in the colony 1833 and was probably assigned to Francis Cotton at Kelvedon since the musters for the years 1833 and 1835 show her in his service. Anna Maria Cotton gave birth to eight of her twelve children at Kelvedon between the years 1831 and 1842 and Mary Ann would most certainly have been involved in their care.

In all, 6.2 per cent of women identified as prostitutes claimed the trade of nursemaid or nurse girl, a trade which was in demand in Van Diemen's Land.¹⁵⁰ And while that did not guarantee that their nursery skills were utilised, the elite of Van Diemen's Land society did entrust their tender children to women who were labelled as prostitutes. Even families who chose to send their children back to Britain to be educated at boarding schools, or 'finished', still relied on convict servants to care for the very young. This nurturing role is an aspect of the women's lives which has been overshadowed by the more public press reports of court appearances, and riotous promiscuous behaviour. While offence records show that women labelled as prostitutes were given the care of young children, unfortunately they only reveal instances when the women were negligent nursemaids. Of the years spent in devoted care nothing is recorded. Jane Dobson and Mary Ann Timbs were nursemaids with blameless careers and hence no record remains of their work. The relationship between convict mothers

¹⁴⁷ TAHO CON40/1/9, Sarah Sheldon (168S) per *Eliza* (1830), image 84.

¹⁴⁸ TAHO CON40/1/4, Jane Dobson (253D) per *Hindustan* (1839), image 23.

¹⁴⁹ TAHO CON40/1/9, Mary Ann Timbs (95T) per *Jane* (1833), image 198.

¹⁵⁰ Appendix G: Trades of women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land 1829-1842. Deborah Oxley found that 6.93 per cent of women in her study were classed as nursemaids, 2.03 per cent as child's maids and nurses were at 0.93 per cent. Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 119.

and the children who accompanied them into servitude has been well documented.¹⁵¹ But less is known of the care which convict women gave to settlers' children.

The fact that someone must have been caring for children sits uncomfortably against documented attitudes towards female convicts performing such duties. Justice of the Peace, Lachlan Macalister, stressed that, 'Nothing can be more baneful than the employment of convict women in charge of children.'¹⁵² Peter Murdock who seldom failed to highlight the worst qualities of convict women, claimed that he did not 'think anything so bad' as to have 'the character of the rising generation' in the charge of such individuals. 'I quite shudder now when I contemplate their conduct, and consider that my children were under their charge.'¹⁵³ How much worse was the picture when 'such individuals' were prostitutes? This is a feature of their colonial experience which is rarely contemplated.

To determine the extent to which women labelled as prostitutes were employed to care for settlers' children, offence records in the CON40 series are a better source than description or appropriation lists. The fact that a prisoner may have the trade of 'nursemaid' on her record, did not guarantee that she performed that duty within the household. The CON40 series identifies offences involving children so it is possible to trace the carer. Using the CON40s of the 1,779 women in this database provided a diverse pool of case studies, and included reassignments which occurred throughout the women's servitude.

There were 59 incidents but 58 women who recorded offences involving children in their care during assignment. Other examples can be found of women who had dealings with children but not while under assignment to a family. The Orphan School, and the Liverpool Street and Dynnyrne Nurseries also employed women from this study. And

¹⁵¹ For the transportation of free children, see Dianne Snowden, "'A Most Humane Regulation': Free Children transported with convict parents', *THRA Papers & Proceedings*, vol. 58, no.1 (April, 2011), pp. 33–41.

¹⁵² Joy Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 46. Damousi cites the Report of the Commission on Immigration, New South Wales Legislative Assembly, 1838, *Parliamentary Papers*. Lachlan Macalister was a Justice of the Peace in New South Wales.

¹⁵³ *British Parliamentary Papers. Reports from Select Committees on Transportation with minutes of evidence proceedings, appendices and indices. Crime and Punishment. Transportation 3* (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 118, evidence of Peter Murdock Esquire; Peter Ross Eldershaw, 'Murdock, Peter (1795-1871)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/murdock-peter-2492> (6 October 2012), Murdock was appointed as police magistrate at Richmond and Oatlands.

Sarah Forward who enjoyed wearing Mrs Harrison's clothes, also cared for three young children who were orphaned when their settler mother died on the voyage out.¹⁵⁴ The above cases are excluded from the statistics as they were not part of private assignment.

A total of 3.3 per cent of the women identified as prostitutes were charged with offences involving children in their care which means that at least that many were in households where they were directly responsible for children or closely interacted with them. The total number of women who actually cared for children can never be known. Firstly because offences which are recorded on the CON40 registers provide an incomplete record of all the charges against women in this study, and secondly because we only have the cases of those who were considered sufficiently remiss in their duty to be charged, not the success stories.

The assignment of women into this role again raises the question as to whether masters knew of the women's history of prostitution and if so how much it mattered. One approach is to see where the mention of prostitution occurred on these women's records. Here the inadequacies of record keeping are again apparent. If, for example, Mary Ann Griffiths only had the label of prostitute on her original gaol report then was she similarly identified in the colony?¹⁵⁵ And if it was widely known at the time of her initial assignment, was any reference made to this when subsequent reassignment occurred? Did the woman's background become less important or even irrelevant as their colonial career progressed? If indeed it had ever been important?

A way of establishing that at least the Muster Master or Principal Superintendent knew of their history of prostitution before assigning them, is to specifically target women who self identified or had the detail placed onto their CON40 record on arrival because if it appeared there, it accompanied them throughout their servitude and after. It is therefore apparent that 69.0 per cent or 40 of the 58 women who offended while caring for children self-identified as prostitutes on arrival in the colony so their history of prostitution would have been known to the colonial officials who assigned servants. They therefore entrusted the care of settlers' children to women who had confessed to being prostitutes. It appears that the need to have children cared for was greater than any

¹⁵⁴ TAHO CON40/1/3, Sarah Forward (52F) per *Sir Charles Forbes* (1827), image 166.

¹⁵⁵ TAHO CON40/1/4, Mary Ann Griffiths (240G) per *Navarino* (1841), image 186; ML TP D5 CY 1197, Gaol list for the *Navarino*.

possible moral threat. The pool of available labour may have been so low that a woman's background was ignored, or her history of prostitution may have been irrelevant.

Since at least 40 women who were known to have been prostitutes at the time of their assignment cared for or were in close contact with their master's children, it is possible to determine whether there were any outstanding qualities which overrode any aversion to allowing prostitutes to care for the young. A further selection was made to isolate women who were specifically stated as being in total charge or at least in a position to be in control of the child and its welfare. For this exercise, cases when the offence was for example using abusive language to master's children, or throwing a basin at the child, were excluded because they did not necessarily guarantee direct responsibility for the care for the child, although they did indicate a close degree of contact. So this is a very conservative sample. There are 29 such records but only 28 women as one committed two offences while directly responsible for children.

The mean age of the women who had been identified as prostitutes and were charged while caring for children was 21.57 years. Only 5 of the 28 women had any mention of nursing on their record, and only one was primarily a nurse girl. Description lists indicate the usual details of pockmarks, two had scorbutic eruptions on their faces when they arrived, and six had tattoos on their arms which was common. They were transported for theft of clothing or money except for one who was guilty of coining. Sarah Johnson Orrill admitted to being gaoled six or seven times for being disorderly while others admitted to previous theft or vagrancy charges. Jane Tonge also stated that she had been in prison seven times. Mary Eastburn was the only woman whose record mentioned being imprisoned for assault prior to her transportation. So amid this cohort of former prostitutes, one common characteristic which may have recommended them to the care of young children was an absence of violent behaviour. Returning to the overall number of offences concerning children, the highest proportion, or 37.3 per cent involved women who were absent without leave and had taken the child with them. (Table 7.4 below)

Table 7.4: **Offences committed while caring for settlers' children**

Charge	Percentage of all charges with children
Absent without leave and taking the child	37.3
Drunk while child minding	23.7
Physical abuse of a child	15.3
Carelessness or neglect	13.6
Miscellaneous offences	10.2
	100

Source: TAHO CON40

Child care was usually an unsupervised time for the nursemaid, so offered a degree of freedom and an easy means of absenting herself. When the destination was recorded it was usually a public house, house of ill-fame, or a disorderly house. As with so many of the actions of convict women they were simply indulging in culturally acceptable behaviour. Thomas Augustine Finnegan master of St. Giles School reported that in areas of London frequented by poor Irish immigrants, it was common for them to take their children to public houses on Sunday.¹⁵⁶

On most occasions the servant and child both returned unharmed. In several cases the outcome was more serious as when Elizabeth Jones left home with Mr Anderson's child, who was later found under a tree at Sandy Bay.¹⁵⁷ Mary Ann Thompson was equally distracted when she took Mr Johnson's child to the Domain. A passerby found the child and delivered it home at 9 o'clock that night.¹⁵⁸ Mary Haggarty was charged by Mr Midgely with losing his infant, while Mary Ann Donovan returned home drunk with her mistress's child who had suffered severe cuts to three fingers.¹⁵⁹ While the examples show a culpable level of neglect it is notable that the women at least initially felt responsible enough to take the children with them. Alternatively they were out on a legitimate errand which included caring for the child when they were distracted. Agnes

¹⁵⁶ Ben Wilson, *The Making of Victorian Values Decency and Dissent in Britain – 1789-1837* (New York, 2007), p. 253, citing *PP* 1816, vol. IV, 1-2, 18-19.

¹⁵⁷ TAHO CON40/1/5, Elizabeth Jones (97J) per *Jane* (1833), image 207.

¹⁵⁸ TAHO CON40/1/10, Mary Ann Thompson (160T) per *Gilbert Henderson* (1840), image 119.

¹⁵⁹ TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Haggarty (468H) per *Royal Admiral* (1842), image 73; TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary Ann Donovan (91D) per *Harmony* (1829), image 52.

Mc Millen took two children with her when she absented herself.¹⁶⁰ Six women were guilty of losing or abandoning children in their care. They either took the children away from their house and mislaid them, or left the house and children unattended.¹⁶¹ When Mr and Mrs Burton went to Chapel, Lydia Smith took the opportunity to also quit the house, but she left behind the three small children who had been entrusted to her care.¹⁶²

The second most common offence involving nursemaids, at 23.7 per cent, was that of being drunk while child minding. Some were associated with the absences noted above, while others occurred at the master's house. But their guilt was greater when they also made their charges drunk. Five women were punished for administering alcohol to the children. Sarah Lamb, Jane Tonge and Mary Regan were all drunk when they returned home, having shared alcohol with the children in their care.¹⁶³ When Mary Browning returned home, she was sober but not so her master's four year old.¹⁶⁴ Administering alcohol was possibly an attempt to placate a fractious child who threatened her leisure. Three months after arriving in the colony Caroline Geoy was charged with being drunk and making 'an Infant in her arms drunk.'¹⁶⁵ Caroline had enjoyed her tipples at home. Brian Harrison described the integral role of alcohol in nineteenth-century British society and among its many uses was that of a pain killer and comforter. To this end it was used by doctors, dentists, surgeons, and as a means of soothing crying babies.¹⁶⁶ So it was not unusual to find this practice in Van Diemen's Land.

Up to 15.3 per cent of cases implied physical abuse towards children although they are probably the most difficult to interpret. They are non specific in merely claiming 'ill-treatment' or 'cruelty'. Elizabeth King's master Mr Evans accused her of beating his daughter, yet Elizabeth was merely admonished which would suggest a low level of

¹⁶⁰ TAHO CON40/1/8, Agnes Mc Millen (253M) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 11.

¹⁶¹ TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Lynch (167L) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 212; TAHO CON40/1/5, Elizabeth Jones (97J) per *Jane* (1833), image 207; TAHO CON40/1/10, Lydia Smith (335S) per *Atwick* (1838), image 16; TAHO CON40/1/10, Mary Ann Thompson (160T) per *Gilbert Henderson* (1840), image 119; TAHO CON40/1/6, Sarah Hall (353H) per *Hindustan* (1839), image 34; TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Haggarty (468H) per *Royal Admiral* (1842), image 73.

¹⁶² TAHO CON40/1/10, Lydia Smith (335S) per *Atwick* (1838), image 16.

¹⁶³ TAHO CON40/1/5, Sarah Lamb (137L) per *Edward* (1834), image 349; TAHO CON40/1/10, Jane Tonge (145T) per *Majestic* (1839), image 114; TAHO CON40/1/8, Mary Regan (305R) per *East London* (1843), image 236.

¹⁶⁴ TAHO CON40/1/1, Mary Browning (135B) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 132.

¹⁶⁵ TAHO CON40/1/4, Caroline Geoy (234G) per *Gilbert Henderson* (1840), image 184.

¹⁶⁶ Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (London, 1971), p. 41.

culpability.¹⁶⁷ Elizabeth continued to serve as a nursemaid and two years later was reassigned to care for Mr Fryett's infant children. Catherine Curran was charged with striking the Ashburner child who was in her care.¹⁶⁸ In November 1834, Ann Powell was charged by her master Mr Fielder with refusing to work and threatening to ill-use the infant in her care.¹⁶⁹ For this she too was merely admonished. Two months later Fielder charged her with disobedience of orders and maliciously beating and injuring his child. At least he had been warned. Dr Grant may have regretted the arrival of his new servant Sophia Barber, for within two months she had absconded after 'inhumanely beating an Infant.'¹⁷⁰

A further 13.6 per cent of cases could be classified as carelessness, negligence and possibly the effects of over exposure to annoying small children. It is not clear what role Rachael Kelly played in the Solomon household but the eighteen year old from Manchester was punished for carelessness in allowing her mistress's child to be burnt by an Italian iron.¹⁷¹ Rachel may have been inexperienced in dealing with young children or deliberately neglectful. Among the 10.2 per cent of miscellaneous offences, two women were guilty of using gross or threatening language to children.¹⁷² The word 'improper' is one which was much favoured by colonial clerks as they documented offences. Mary Mc Sweeny used improper language towards Mr Walker's progeny, while Mary Sawyer was guilty of improper behaviour towards the Nicholls children.¹⁷³ Sarah Shelton was not guilty of an offence involving children, but was 'an improper person to be in a family with young children.'¹⁷⁴ The action of Ann Smith who cared for Mrs Mawle's infant was judged to be highly inappropriate. Ann was a housemaid from London who had been described by the surgeon-superintendent on the *Hindostan* as 'careless'. She was severely punished for giving medicine to her mistress's infant

¹⁶⁷ TAHO CON40/1/5, Elizabeth King (49K) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 249.

¹⁶⁸ TAHO CON40/1/1, Catherine Curran (77C) per *Providence* (1826), image 269.

¹⁶⁹ TAHO CON40/1/7, Ann Powell (107P) per *William Bryan* (1833), image 216.

¹⁷⁰ TAHO CON40/1/2, Sophia Barber (402B) per *Nautilus* (1838), image 57.

¹⁷¹ TAHO CON40/1/6, Rachael Kelly (106K) per *Arab* (1836), image 161. An Italian goffering iron was used to press the frilled ribbons and ruffles on infants' clothing and bonnets: <http://fredalightfoot.blogspot.com.au/2012/06/history-of-washing-and-ironing.html> (2 July 2012).

¹⁷² TAHO CON40/1/3, Mary Dollison (113D) per *Eliza* (1830), image 63; TAHO CON40/1/9, Margaret Shaw (182S) per *America* (1831), image 91.

¹⁷³ TAHO CON40/1/9, Mary Mc Sweeny (133S) per *Mermaid* (1828), image 67; TAHO CON40/1/9, Mary Sawyer (121S) per *Sovereign* (1827), image 61.

¹⁷⁴ TAHO CON40/1/9, Sarah Sheldon (168S) per *Eliza* (1830), image 84.

without the knowledge of the mother.¹⁷⁵ A desire for solitude may have persuaded Rosanna Holcraft that her duty did not include childcare on the Sabbath. She was punished for refusing to go to chapel with her mistress's children, on plea of being a Catholic.¹⁷⁶

Some women committed more than one offence involving children indicating that they continued to be reassigned in households with children and were possibly still employed as nursemaids. Mary Regan was charged with being in her mistress's son's bedroom for an improper purpose. There was no clue as to what the improper purpose was or whether it involved the son or merely his bedroom. Several years later while in service to the Roberts family Mary was charged with being drunk and causing her master's child to be the same.¹⁷⁷ A degree of trust must have been given to Mary Lynch for she was guilty of absence without leave while in charge of her mistress's children. She recorded the same offence while serving in another household. A year later Mary was employed as a nurse at the Liverpool Street Nursery, so it seems that she had an aptitude for childcare which was eventually reserved for convict children.¹⁷⁸

Conclusion

There is no evidence of discrimination on the grounds of a past history of prostitution, when women were selected to care for children even those of the élite families such as the Fenn Kemps. It is certain that for 69.0 per cent of women their history of prostitution was known to authorities when they were assigned to care for young children. This fact provides further reason to reassess what has been the accepted attitude towards prostitution and prostitutes in colonial Van Diemen's Land. If these women were outcasts and pariahs, then colonial authorities were guilty of gross negligence in entrusting infants to their care. Instead a more permissive climate may have operated which pre-dated the Contagious Diseases Legislation of the late nineteenth century. But one characteristic of these women which could have recommended them to the role was an absence of violent behaviour.

¹⁷⁵ TAHO CON40/1/10, Ann Smith (378S) per *Hindustan* (1839), image 31.

¹⁷⁶ TAHO CON40/1/6, Rosanna Holcraft (363H) per *Gilbert Henderson* (1840), image 38.

¹⁷⁷ TAHO CON40/1/8, Mary Regan (305R) per *East London* (1843), image 236.

¹⁷⁸ TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Lynch (167L) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 212.

Women with a history of prostitution were assigned to colonial mistresses and were under their supervision within the households. While that relationship was frequently turbulent as demonstrated by the offence records, no sources survive to document the co-operation which must have typified some relationships. When convict women absented themselves from service it was often in pursuit of entertainment and companionship. Respite from the constant demands of the household routine caused them to abandon their tasks and seek out more pleasurable activities. While these findings are based on the offence records, they should not be interpreted as evidence of the criminality of women labelled as prostitutes. The many factors which governed whether or not a servant was taken before the magistrate defy any such judgment. Rather it should be seen as evidence of the significant role which the women must have played in settler households.

CHAPTER 8: WHO WILL BE RESCUED?

RECIDIVISM OR REHABILITATION

Introduction: Ellen Lovett's story

Mr Anderson's flock of geese was the target for three inept young Irish women from County Cavan. They were all prosecuted and sentenced to seven years transportation to Van Diemen's Land. Ellen Lovett, Mary Keating and Catherine Thompson probably shared a room in the poorer district of Cavan where all three professed to have been on the town for five, three and two years respectively. Ellen was the elder of the three and the only one to receive medical care during the voyage on the *Hope* in 1842. Surgeon-Superintendent Richard Lewis diagnosed hysteria, but the symptoms resembled a respiratory disease which may have been the legacy of her nocturnal profession and poor housing.

During Ellen's three years of assignment in Van Diemen's Land she was charged with the same minor offences which populated the conduct records of many female servants and which disrupted the daily routine of colonial households. She was repeatedly 'out after hours', occasionally drunk, and displayed a lack of deference when she laughed in the presence of the Principal Superintendent. But in March 1845 Ellen was granted her ticket-of-leave and the nature of her offences changed. Within two weeks she had been charged with being in bed with a man and sentenced to two months hard labour. The sentence was not carried out, and Ellen was discharged when it was found that there was 'no disturbance and the door [was] shut'.¹ Her shipmate Mary Linn was a partner in

¹ TAHO CON40/1/6, Ellen Lovett (254L) per *Hope* (1842), image 241.

crime and received the same sentence which was discharged for the same reason.² Magistrate John Price may have considered that while the women's sexual activities were improper, they posed minimal threat to law and order. He reassessed his opinion when three weeks later Ellen was found guilty of misconduct in living in a disorderly house. The police report in the *Courier* claimed that she was charged with living in a house of ill-fame although aware of the consequences.³ Ellen evaded the constables for the next six months until she was found guilty of misconduct in being in a brothel at 12 pm. Her ticket-of-leave was finally cancelled when she was charged with misconduct in 'getting her living by prostitution'.

Ellen's offences reflected the change in her circumstances once she had obtained her ticket-of-leave. No longer under the control of a master, she was free to live where and how she pleased within the regulations of the Convict Department. It also meant that she now had to support herself. In 1847 Ellen was living in a lodging house when she was a witness at the inquest into the death of Thomas Ward. She shared the house with Ward and his wife Margaret, Margaret's brother James Smith, and Charles Stephens a dumb mute. At the inquest Ellen stated that, 'I am a prisoner of the crown holding a ticket-of-leave and reside in Market Street ... yesterday morning a little after eight o'clock I was in bed in the inner room'.⁴ Ellen heard a commotion in the adjoining room, and went to the aid of her friends the Wards. They restrained Charles Stephens who they suspected of trying to leave without paying the rent. During the scuffle Ward suffered a heart attack and died. The inner room which Ellen rented was typical of the accommodation to which prostitutes took their clients. Although Market Street was very short it was frequently mentioned in police reports as the site of brothels and disorderly houses. The previous year Julia Kelly had been charged with keeping a disorderly house

² TAHO CON40/1/6, Mary Linn (250L) per *Hope* (1842), image 239. The following month Sarah Singleton was also charged with being in a disorderly house and sentenced to two months hard labour but the following day it too was discharged, 'If no disturbance and the door not open'; TAHO CON40/1/10, Sarah Singleton (379S) per *Hindustan* (1839), image 31.

³ *Courier*, 20 May 1845, p.3.

⁴ TAHO SC195/1/20, Findings, depositions and associate papers relating to Coroner's Inquests, Index to Inquests c. 1828-1930 (1629), 15 February 1847, p. 11; *Colonial Times*, 16 February 1847, p. 3. Market Street is now called Criterion Street.

in Market Street.⁵ In April 1848 a week after Ellen's second conviction for prostitution, William Birmingham was accused of keeping a brothel in the same street.⁶

Deprived of her ticket-of-leave as she is obtaining her living by prostitution⁷

No attempt was made to compile a register of prostitutes until 1879 when the Contagious Diseases Legislation Act was passed, so no systematic record exists of women who practised prostitution during the early nineteenth century in Van Diemen's Land.⁸ When Kay Daniels examined the subject of prostitution, she found that government documents, records of rescue groups and the observations of the 'respectable classes' were the only sources available.⁹ Her aim was to decipher the meaning of prostitution in nineteenth-century Tasmanian society and she declared the sources to be insufficient for that task. While those insufficiencies are apparent when addressing the questions of this study, there are also advantages to be found in using the Van Diemen's Land convict records.

Unlike the labels of 'prostitute', 'on the town' or 'unfortunate', which appeared on the women's records which accompanied them to the colony, the designation of prostitution on colonial offence records is less defined and sometimes couched in euphemism. Ambiguity surrounded the definition of prostitution and the colonial conduct records (CON40 series) which recorded charges were not always specific about the nature of the charge nor the exact behaviour involved. Some charges were simply for sexual misconduct. Whereas in Britain, prostitution itself was not punishable, when detected among the prisoner population of Van Diemen's Land, both prostitution and sexual misconduct were chargeable offences.

⁵ *Colonial Times*, 15 May 1846, p. 4.

⁶ *Courier*, 26 April 1848, p. 2; Ellen Lovett was also charged with getting her living through prostitution on 18 April 1848. Ellen lost her ticket-of-leave and after ordering her removal to Ross the Convict Department lost interest in her. Nothing more was recorded on her CON40 record. But one authority still tracked Ellen. The Register General recorded her death from consumption a year later, TAHO RGD35/1/2, Register of Deaths (2752), 24 November 1849, Hobart.

⁷ TAHO CON40/1/2, Biddy Craig (532C) per *Waverley* (1842), image 233.

⁸ *Contagious Diseases Act*, 42 Vic. no. 36 (1879). It was reinforced by 45 Vic. no. 23 (1882).

⁹ Kay Daniels, 'Prostitution in Tasmania during the transition from penal settlement to "civilized" society', in Kay Daniels (ed.), *So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History* (Sydney, 1984), p. 15.

A further impediment to the examination of prostitution within the colony arises because the records identify only the women who were charged with prostitution or sexual offences. Ellen Lovett was punished four times for offences of a sexual nature which included the specific charges of prostitution. Whether she was detected and discharged on other occasions is unknown. Grace Heinbury told the Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline that while she was an assigned servant, the lodger 'asked me to prostitute myself to him'.¹⁰ If her evidence was correct, and if she obliged, then here is one instance in which a woman whose life was highly regulated and scrutinised was involved in prostitution yet it remained undetected and absent from offence or court records. It is also apparent when cross-referencing offence records, newspaper reports and court records that the Convict Department did not always place such charges on women's records.

Despite these limitations the conduct records of women in Van Diemen's Land provide one of the few opportunities to examine prostitution prior to its criminalisation. This study is unique in that it holds the background stories of 1,779 women who were already known to have worked as prostitutes. An examination of offences prior to 1870 offers an overview of the circumstances which may have been common to many women within that cohort. It reveals whether women who had previously practiced prostitution returned to that trade within the colony, and in so doing it measures the degree to which transported prostitutes were able to break the cycle of poverty, unemployment and prostitution. Daniels is correct in that a definitive survey of prostitutes is unachievable, but this study was nevertheless able to achieve more than a mere examination of the sexual exploits of a particular cohort of women.

It was possible to analyse offence records for charges of prostitution within set parameters, whereas to analyse five decades of court records and bench books for charges of prostitution was not feasible. With ongoing digitization of convict records such a project may in the future be possible. Thus a more achievable task was to target charges which were recorded in the CON40 series. This first analysis is therefore based on the CON40 conduct records of the 1,779 women identified as prostitutes prior to

¹⁰ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841- 43', p. 263, evidence of Grace Heinbury.

their arrival in Van Diemen's Land for evidence of prostitution, and to create a picture of their sexual activity. The second analysis is a comparative investigation of both the women identified as prostitutes prior to transportation, and those who were not. It uses the conduct records of 1,114 women from fourteen ships.¹¹

Colonial charges of a sexual nature often had two components. Women were primarily guilty of not being in a legally prescribed space, and then it followed that there was a sexual element to the charge. Only later in the woman's colonial career when her movements were to a lesser degree dictated by the Convict Department, did the charge of 'being a common prostitute' stand alone as the offence.¹² When the offence took place within an assigned domestic space, prostitution was not mentioned but the woman was punished for such actions as being in bed with someone. So it was then not a charge of absence but a sexual offence and phrased in such terms as 'immoral behaviour' or 'misconduct', and frequently accompanied by abusive language or drunkenness on the part of the offender. The sexual offence was not necessarily one of a commercial transaction.

The many thousands of charges which were laid against convict women and the hundreds of men who interpreted and recorded those charges guaranteed that ambiguity and subtext would operate. Esther Lynes was found in an 'indecent position' but the description of the charge is insufficient to serve as a criterion for statistical analysis.¹³ Firstly it may or may not have meant that Esther was interrupted during sexual intercourse. A woman found drinking with male servants and ignoring the physically prescribed boundaries of decorum could be described by a mistress as being in 'an indecent position'. When a man was found hiding under the bed, it looks to be a sexual liaison but that is not certain. And secondly there is even less evidence of a commercial transaction. For this analysis, occasions when a woman was found in bed have been included as offences of a sexual nature but not prostitution because there is no means of establishing whether payment took place. Young assigned men and women who clandestinely shared beds under the master's roof were not necessarily involved in paid

¹¹ Appendix M: List of ships used for a comparative analysis of charges made against women.

¹² For example in 1861 Betsy Irwin per *Royal Admiral* was a free woman when she was charged simply with being a common prostitute and sentenced to one month's hard labour.

¹³ TAHO CON40/1/5, Esther Lynes (100L) per *America* (1831), image 330.

sex. They were punished, but prostitution could not be assumed, and indeed records do not generally claim prostitution in those instances.

Charges of ‘misconduct’ which were brought against women are also open to interpretation. The charge could refer to any number of behaviours and can also appear on male offence records. When Ellen Lovett was charged with ‘misconduct in getting her living by prostitution’ the meaning was quite clear.¹⁴ Yet the word ‘misconduct’ was indiscriminately used and it is therefore not part of this analysis. Cases when women were found with soldiers, sailors or men in various places outside their designated residence were similarly included as offences of a sexual nature and not conclusive as prostitution. Thus the presence of the word ‘prostitute’ and ‘prostitution’ have been taken as indicators but again only when confident that they were referring to commercial sex.

What authorities called ‘prostitution’ was similarly rejected when it was clearly co-habitation. The charge of ‘living in a state of prostitution’ was excluded because that often meant co-habitation. So too were cases where women were charged with immoral or illicit behaviour as that did not necessarily mean prostitution. Using the words prostitute or prostitution as the criteria also excluded Jane Torr from this particular count.¹⁵ Although it is known that she was part of the organized prostitution racket at the Launceston Colonial Hospital, her CON40 record made no mention of that involvement. Jane’s frequent absences while under assignment to Ronald Gunn were the only clues present on her record, which in hindsight indicated her involvement in prostitution. Being in company with prostitutes was also excluded from this count. The following are therefore conservative findings.

Of the 1,779 records, there are 33 charges which specifically use the word ‘prostitute’ or ‘prostitution’. Twelve stated that the woman was a prostitute and 12 claimed that she earned her living through prostitution. In two cases the women confessed to prostituting themselves. ‘Being a common prostitute’ is the sole charge in 8 cases. Of the cases

¹⁴ TAHO CON40/1/6, Ellen Lovett per *Hope* (1842), image 241: April 1848, ‘misconduct in getting her living by prostitution’.

¹⁵ TAHO CON40/1/9, Jane Torr (56T) per *Eliza* (1830), image 180; see also TAHO GO33/1/8, ‘Inquiry into Prostitution at the Launceston General Hospital 1831’, p. 623, evidence of Constable Benjamin Rogers.

which were excluded from the count, two alluded to the fact that they kept company with prostitutes, and the other appeared to be co-habitation. Therefore 30 charges which used the word ‘prostitute’ could confidently be accepted as references to obtaining a living through prostitution. Of those women, 63.3 per cent held their ticket-of-leave, 20.0 per cent were married, 13.3 per cent were assigned and 3.3 per cent were free.¹⁶

Since a recognized site of prostitution was the brothel, charges related to brothels were also examined. Only the use of the word ‘brothel’ was counted, and charges such as living in an improper place or improper state were excluded as insufficiently specific.¹⁷ Forty two charges were found, of which 76.9 per cent held ticket-of-leave and 23.1 percent were assigned, although 3 of those assignments were the result of having their ticket-of-leave suspended, two of which were for prostitution.¹⁸ Fourteen charges were for women residing in brothels all of whom held a ticket-of-leave. Two charges were for keeping brothels, both being married women.

By combining the two groups of offences for prostitution (prostitute/prostitution and brothel) it revealed that 73.6 per cent of the charges were against women holding a ticket-of-leave, 13.9 per cent were assigned, 11.1 per cent were married and 1.4 percent of the women were free. (Table 8.1 below)

Table 8.1: Status of women with a pre-transportation history of prostitution who were charged with prostitution related offences in the colony (prostitute/prostitution and brothel)

Status	Percentage
Ticket-of-leave	73.6
Assigned	13.9
Married	11.1
Free	1.4
Total	100

Source: TAHO40

The data indicates that ticket-of-leave women were more likely to be involved in prostitution. Assigned female servants were provided with accommodation, food and

¹⁶Nineteen women held a ticket-of-leave, 6 women were married, 4 women were assigned and only one was free.

¹⁷TAHO CON40/1/4, Elizabeth Dixon (226D) per *Atwick* (1838), image 14; TAHO CON40/1/7, Elizabeth Robinson (91R) per *America* (1831), image 282.

¹⁸Twenty women held a ticket-of-leave and 6 were assigned.

clothing by their master or mistress. Their day to day needs were thus met and they did not need to resort to prostitution to survive. That does not mean that assigned women were not paid for sexual services but there are differences in the sexual offences of assigned and ticket-of-leave women. Emma Lloyd was an assigned servant who stated that she prostituted herself to buy clothes. Her statement could demonstrate that she used prostitution in order to purchase luxury items rather than for survival. It has been suggested that such statements demonstrated flaws in the assignment system and the abuse, or at least neglect on the part of masters who failed to adequately provide for their servants. When Josiah Spode was asked if he knew of instances wherein masters allowed assigned servants 'to be continually on the town', to avoid the expense of clothing the servant, he said that he knew of several such instances.¹⁹ One may have been Mary Haigh who told the same committee that she was allowed to go to public houses, and remain out all night. Her assigned family was unable to afford wages and clothes, so she was encouraged to acquire them in whatever manner she pleased.²⁰ In some cases this did occur, but figures taken from CON40 offence records do not support the practice as being widespread among assigned women. John Price maintained that constables frequently took assigned women out of common brothels.²¹ Statistics for assigned women who were found in brothels would however dispute this, since only 23.1 per cent of convict women found in brothels were assigned.

It is apparent that specific charges of prostitution were more frequent once women received their ticket-of-leave and are much less a part of the assignment experience. Assigned women were not habitually involved in prostitution. It was ticket-of-leave women who found it necessary to return to the trade. That is not to say that assigned women did not practise prostitution because 13.9 per cent did.

Not only was prostitution a more urgent economic strategy once women were not supported by a master, but they also had greater freedom to practise the trade. Price also stressed that women misinterpreted the degree of discipline to which they were still subject with a ticket-of-leave. 'The woman upon punishment finds that she is not out of

¹⁹ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 150, evidence of Josiah Spode.

²⁰ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 309, evidence of Mary Haig.

²¹ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', p. 146, evidence of John Price.

the hands of the police as she previously imagined she would be.’²² Magistrate John Price also believed that the advantages which a ticket-of-leave bestowed upon women such as a greater choice of employment and an ability to dress better than previously permitted by their master or mistress caused them to be a more law abiding group. Some however asked to be returned to assignment when they found themselves barred from theatres and brothels. They considered that such restrictions nullified any advantage in holding a ticket-of-leave.²³

Price expressed a preference for ticket-of-leave women as house servants since they had acquired a general knowledge of colonial service and they were able to turn their hands to everything, thus proving more useful than free immigrant women.²⁴ But he added that few emancipists found respectable positions involving a trade such as dressmaker or tailoress. Most entered the precarious world of domestic service which by the 1840s when Price was giving his evidence was characterised by a surfeit of servants. He admitted that women had trouble finding employment and that masters and mistresses were less tolerant of misconduct than in previous decades.²⁵ Here is an echo of the difficulties which faced them as unskilled women in Britain, and ticket-of-leave women who resorted to prostitution may have been falling back on those same survival strategies once assignment had ended. The greater frequency with which ticket-of-leave women were apprehended in brothels would indicate that brothels were a source of employment and accommodation, both of which became the responsibility of the woman post assignment.

In 1845 Susannah Rawcliffe who was married and leading a previously law abiding life was charged with gross disorderly conduct in keeping a common brothel. The charge was overturned by the Lieutenant-Governor who pronounced the sentence to be illegal. Interesting as that story may be, of more significance to this study is the fact that the

²² TAHO CSO22/1/50, ‘Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43’, pp. 178-179, evidence of John Price.

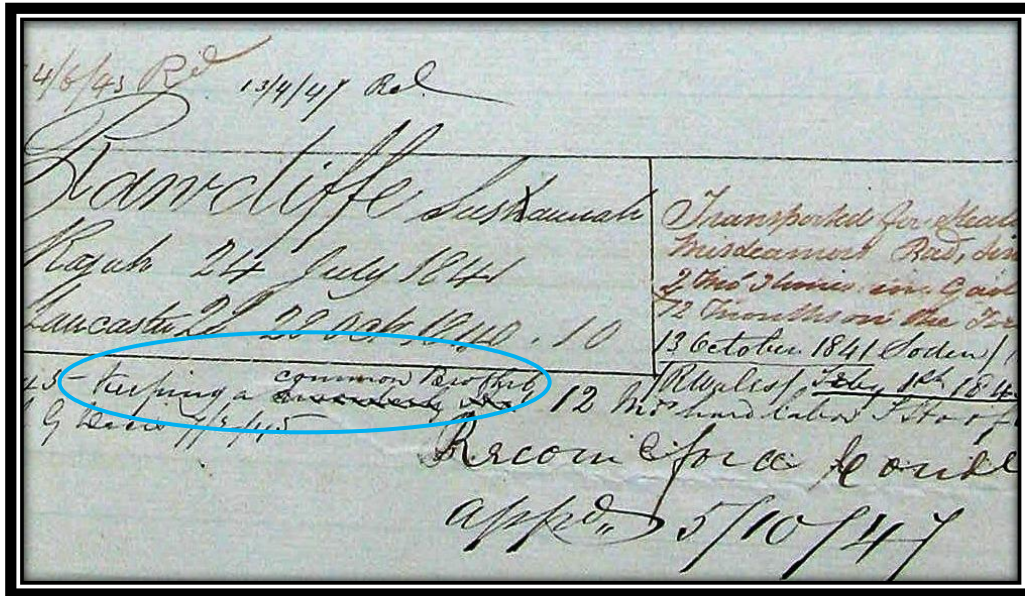
²³ TAHO CSO22/1/50, ‘Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43’, pp. 177-178, evidence of John Price.

²⁴ TAHO CSO22/1/50, ‘Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43’, p. 175, evidence of John Price.

²⁵ TAHO CSO22/1/50, ‘Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43’, pp. 177-178, evidence of John Price.

words ‘common brothel’ replaced ‘disorderly house’ which was crossed out on her conduct record.²⁶

Figure 8.1: Conduct record for Susannah Rawcliffe per *Rajah*



Source: TAHO CON40/1/8

The clerk must have understood the words to have different meanings yet the colonial press and indeed some CON40 records demonstrated a fluid use of the words ‘brothel’, ‘disorderly house’ and ‘house of ill-fame/repute’, whereby the terms appeared to be interchangeable.²⁷ The *Colonial Times* used the terms ‘disorderly house’ and ‘common bawdry’ to describe the same premises in Melville Street.²⁸ The *Launceston Examiner* was equally comfortable in employing both ‘brothel’ and ‘house of ill-fame’ to describe the same house in York-street.²⁹ When it was recorded on Ellen Lovett’s conduct record that she was charged with living in a ‘disorderly house’, the *Courier* reported that she

²⁶ TAHO CON40/1/8, Susannah Rawcliffe (228R) per *Rajah* (1841), image 208.

²⁷ William Fraser, ‘a man of colour’, kept houses in Macquarie and Melville Streets which were variously described as a ‘disorderly house’, a ‘house of ill-fame’ and a ‘common brothel’. *Colonial Times* 23 October 1829, p. 3: ‘a brothel in the heart of Macquarie Street’; Ann Hughes was found in the house of William Fraser in Melville Street; Hannah Whitely was found drunk in a house of ill-fame kept by William Fraser; Margaret Jones was found in the house of William Fraser alias Sibley. *Colonial Times*, 4 January 1842, p. 3: a ‘disorderly house’ in Goulburn Street was also described as a ‘brothel’.

²⁸ *Colonial Times*, 18 February 1857: ‘Disorderly House’ and ‘common bawdry’, supplement to *Colonial Times* [no page number].

²⁹ *Launceston Examiner*, 26 January 1860, p. 3: ‘Robbery in a Brothel’ also called a ‘house of ill-fame’.

was guilty of living in a ‘house of ill-fame’.³⁰ To determine whether there was a difference in the various terms and the purposes to which each of the premises was put, an analysis was made of the status of women who were charged with offences relating to each of the premises.

There were 183 charges and one mere accusation relating to disorderly houses.³¹ Some were incurred by the same woman. For example in 1835 assigned servant Mary Ann Douglas was found in a disorderly house and in 1839 and 1840 as a married woman, she was charged with running disorderly houses.³² Of the 183 charges, 143 were for being in disorderly houses. Assigned women accounted for 53.8 per cent of the charges, 35.0 per cent were ticket-of-leave and 11.0 per cent were married women.³³ (Table 8.2, p. 298) Details varied but the charge often included the fact that the woman was also out after hours. Others were for being in bed with someone in the disorderly house, being undressed and hiding under the bed, or being in an indecent position or situation with a man in a disorderly house. Some records named the other party, or simply indicated that he was a soldier, pass holder, ticket of leave man, or gentleman. There is no doubt that a disorderly house was one where sexual encounters took place. Sarah Singleton’s charge of being in a disorderly house made no mention of being in bed, but an intimate situation was clearly understood when she was excused because the door was closed.³⁴ The higher percentage of assigned women found in disorderly houses might suggest that women frequented disorderly houses less for economic necessity than as a recreational activity since assignment usually guaranteed a means of support from her master.

Of the women charged with keeping disorderly houses, 62.1 per cent were married and 37.9 per cent held a ticket-of-leave.³⁵ No assigned women ran disorderly houses. Since the press considered that ‘brothel’, ‘house of ill-fame’ and ‘disorderly house’ were synonymous the findings could support public opinion which was expressed in the

³⁰ *Courier*, 20 May 1845, p. 3; *Colonial Times*, 4 May 1852, p. 2 refers to ‘brothels’, ‘disorderly houses’ and ‘houses of ill-fame’ as being the same.

³¹ The accusation was made against Hannah Clewlow per *Harmony* who was assigned to Mr Hoskisson. It was claimed that he ran a disorderly house.

³² TAHO CON40/1/4, Mary Ann Douglas (205D) per *Westmoreland* (1836), image 7.

³³ Seventy seven women were assigned, 50 held a ticket-of-leave and 16 were married.

³⁴ TAHO CON40/1/10, Sarah Singleton (379S) per *Hindostan* (1839) image 31.

³⁵ Twenty nine women were charged with keeping disorderly houses, of which 18 were married and 11 held a ticket-of-leave.

Launceston Examiner in 1846 that ‘prisoner women’ married in order to pursue the career of brothel keeping.³⁶ All women who were found guilty of living in disorderly houses held a ticket-of-leave. Assigned women were therefore more likely to be found in disorderly houses, ticket-of-leave women were more likely to be living in them, and married women running them.

Some women were charged with disorderly conduct in being in a house of ill-fame or ill-repute. Although this only accounted for 11 charges they too were tested to see whether the women held the same status as those found in brothels or disorderly houses. It showed that 57.1 per cent of women found in houses of ill-fame/ill-repute were assigned, 14.3 per cent held their ticket-of-leave and 28.6 per cent were married. The two women who were charged with keeping houses of ill-repute were married. Only one woman was charged with living in a house of ill-fame and she held a ticket-of-leave. Judging by the status of the females who were charged, disorderly houses and houses of ill-fame/ill-repute were similar in that assigned women were more likely to be found in them than in brothels.

Table 8.2: **Percentage of assigned and ticket-of-leave women found in brothels, disorderly houses and houses of ill-fame/ill-repute**

	Brothel	Disorderly house	House of ill-repute
Ticket-of-leave	76.9	35.0	14.3
Assigned	23.1	53.8	57.1

Source: TAHO CON40

This suggests that disorderly houses and houses of ill-fame/ill-repute were not necessarily frequented by convict women for the same purpose as brothels. Although the contemporary press considered the premises to be the same, the subtle difference in the status of women who were charged suggests a different reading. It is possible that disorderly houses and houses of ill-fame/ill-repute were not always the site of a commercial transaction. Assigned women who were most likely to be found in them were supported by their master. That does not rule out payment for sex but it also allows for a variety of reasons for sexual encounters within those spaces. When payment did

³⁶ *Launceston Examiner*, 18 November 1846, p. 6.

occur it may have funded the purchase of luxury items such as clothing, alcohol and tobacco.

Kay Daniels described disorderly houses as cheap lodging houses.³⁷ If her definition is correct, then it may offer yet another explanation for the higher percentage of assigned women who frequented them. Women may have visited for the male clients who lodged there. An opportunistic and casual form of prostitution may have operated whereby assigned women knew where to find clients if they were able to temporarily escape from their domestic chores. It is also possible that assigned women may have more readily been reported by brothel keepers who resented their moonlighting. Ticket-of-leave women worked and resided in brothels on a permanent basis, which was not possible under assignment. Confusion over the terms might explain John Price's assertion that constables often took assigned women out of brothels.

Policing may also have been more vigilant towards women under assignment than those holding a ticket-of-leave or free. Or the charges (and the status of women found in them) may have been governed by when the premises were checked by the constables. Brothels may have more often been searched at night when assigned women were at their master's house whereas they took opportunities during the day to visit brothels when surveillance was less frequent. Disorderly houses may have been more often raided during the day when assigned women could find opportunities to sneak away to visit them. They were not permanently working in disorderly houses or brothels and did not sleep there, but greater numbers came and went for shorter periods during the day. Neither explanation is convincing however, because if assigned women were more heavily policed they would have been equally detected in brothels. Ticket-of-leave women would similarly been represented in charges for disorderly houses if they had the same purpose as brothels. The evidence shows that the premises were for differing purposes. Disorderly houses and houses of ill-fame/ill-repute may have been less exclusively sites of commercial prostitution. A disorderly house may also have been an unlicensed drinking den, which could have explained the frequent policing of such

³⁷ Daniels, 'Prostitution in Tasmania', in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 32.

premises. Brothels were however more often frequented by ticket-of-leave women which would suggest that prostitution was a post assignment survival strategy.³⁸

To address the question of how differently women labelled as prostitutes experienced transportation compared with the non-prostitute population, charges involving both colonial prostitution and sexual misconduct were examined for all women. This was done by again using the offence records of all women arriving on fourteen ships.³⁹ The test for charges which could have been related to prostitution used the same criteria of brothels, prostitute/prostitution, disorderly houses and houses of ill-repute/ill-fame. A more general investigation was also made of charges related to all forms of sexual misconduct including charges such as being in bed with a male servant, living in a state of fornication, exposing herself while having connexion with a soldier in a public street, and charges of having an illegitimate child. Again the use of terms such as ‘improper’ and ‘immoral’ have only been included if it was clear that sexual impropriety was indicated.

Using the exclusive categories of ‘prostitute/prostitution’ and ‘brothel’ yielded low numbers for both cohorts although it was higher at 3.3 per cent for previously identified prostitutes and 0.9 per cent for women with no history of prostitution prior to their transportation. When the analysis included disorderly houses and houses of ill-fame/ill-repute (as in all possible prostitution charges), it showed that 19.8 per cent of women who were identified as prostitutes prior to transportation were charged and 7.5 per cent of women with no previous history of prostitution. Finally when looking at all offences of a sexual nature, 33.9 per cent of women identified as prostitutes were charged and 20.1 of women with no history of prostitution. (Table 8.3 below)

³⁸ Newspaper reports confirm the higher percentage of ticket-of-leave women; *Colonial Times*, 10 December 1839, p. 7; *Colonial Times*, 4 February 1840, p. 6; *Colonial Times*, 29 April 1845, p.3; *Hobartown Mercury*, 23 December 1854, p. 3; *Hobartown Mercury*, 24 January 1855, p. 2; *Colonial Times*, 3 January 1856, p. 3.

³⁹ Appendix M: List of ships used for a comparative analysis of charges made against women. (That is 1,114 records, 369 women identified as prostitutes and 745 who were not. The same dataset was used to examine charges in chapter 7.)

Table 8.3: **Charges related to prostitution and sexual misconduct for all women by percentage**

	Prostitute	Non-prostitute
Prostitution related offences	19.8	7.5
All sexual misconduct offences	33.9	20.1

Source: TAHO CON 40 (1,114 records)

Therefore women with a previous history of prostitution were almost three times more likely to be charged with offences relating to prostitution than women with no previous history of prostitution. They were also more likely to be charged with sexual misconduct. The only record which contained the information of a woman's pre-transportation history of prostitution was her CON40 and as previously noted, that was accessible to only a very select group of officials.⁴⁰ Thus masters, police officers and magistrates had no knowledge of that previous history when they charged and sentenced the women.

Lloyd Robson believed that 1 in 8 women (13 per cent) were convicted for acts of misconduct relating to sexual behaviour.⁴¹ More specifically, Payne found that 5 per cent of women were charged with offences relating to prostitution.⁴² This study shows that 19.8 per cent of women previously identified as prostitutes and 7.5 per cent of non-prostitutes committed colonial offences involving prostitution.

While convict women's sexual offences, including prostitution, were recorded, it is apparent that the heightened interest in the sexuality of convict women under assignment was more by default. It was offences against the Convict Department rather than sexual behaviour which were the focus of many charges brought against the women. Thus the policing of women's sexuality was often concomitant with other offences more pertinent to the aims of the convict administration. They were primarily absences from authorised premises with the sexual component secondary. It was the impact on her employer which took precedence, either the inconvenience of an absent

⁴⁰ That included the Principal Superintendent and Muster Master.

⁴¹ Lloyd Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia: An Enquiry into the Origin and Character of the Convicts transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1787-1852* (Melbourne, 1976), p. 134.

⁴² H S Payne, 'A Statistical Study of Female Convicts in Tasmania', 1843-53', *THRA Papers and Proceedings*, 9 (1961), p. 63.

servant, or the fracturing of a prescribed version of appropriate behaviour. Moral outrage or disgust was less evident, and policing for health reasons was absent. It was also the Convict Department which suffered when sexual misconduct resulted in pregnancy. This was a frequent outcome and it was not the sexual act which was punished, but the woman's pregnant condition. Women were regularly charged with having an illegitimate child and were thus no longer assignable until the child was weaned. For convict women the policing of sexual misconduct was often a by-product.

Kirsty Reid challenged the accepted view of female factories as places to shelter women from a profoundly misogynistic colonial culture. She suggested that their function was more for segregation to prevent women from forming relationships as and when they chose, and to stop them seeking out independent and illicit means of support.⁴³ Prostitution also offered that independence which the authorities sought to quash. As women's labour potential became a priority following the Bigge Report, private and intimate relations became even more a matter of public policy, and personal and private issues such as sex, childbirth, and marriage were transformed into arenas of conflict and contestation between assigned servants and employers and convicts and the state.⁴⁴ As Reid also points out, prostitutes were able to 'subvert dominant-class ideologies of femininity and domesticity'.⁴⁵

When women at the George Town Female Factory were found to be receiving liquor from sailors, a form of exchange or commerce was assumed.⁴⁶ In such transactions prostitution was a likely currency, yet it was the acquisition of prohibited items which most offended the Convict Department. While prostitution may have been objected to, it was the trading of items which concerned authorities. That trade gave women a degree of independence and self determination.

⁴³ Kirsty Reid, *Gender, crime and empire: Convicts, settlers and the state in early colonial Australia* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 116-117.

⁴⁴ TAHO CSO84/1/1, page 465, Arthur to Spode 4 Aug 1829. This correspondence relates the case of Jane Tumley whose permission to marry was revoked until such time as her mistress Mrs Westbrook made a favourable report about Jane. Reference cited in Reid, *Gender, crime and empire*, p. 155.

⁴⁵ Kirsty Reid, 'Setting Women to Work: The Assignment System and Female Convict Labour in Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1839', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 34, no. 121 (2003), p. 275.

⁴⁶ Joy Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 103.

According to Daniels, the conceptualisation of prostitution as a social problem marked the beginning of the transition from a penal colony to a free settlement which was increasingly dominated by the values of the middle class.⁴⁷ Historians have correctly emphasised the influence of the middle class during the latter part of the nineteenth century in setting a moral tone. But in so doing they have failed to recognise the significant role of the Convict Department and its priorities, or rather its lack of priorities with regard to prostitution and sexual misconduct earlier in the century. While the latter decades of the nineteenth century experienced that conceptualisation of prostitution as a social problem, it also saw a decrease in the ratio of convict women who received such charges. Such was inevitable as the number of emancipist women decreased over time. Thus those offences no longer impacted on the Convict Department. In a reversal of priorities, the emphasis moved to focus more on the sexual component of the charge. Daniels believed that the state took little interest in prostitution during the convict period.⁴⁸ It is now apparent that the lack of interest was due to the differing priorities at the time, in which prostitution and sexual misconduct were simply of less importance.

Prostitution as a political tool

Anti-transportationists described the ungoverned passions and licentious sexual appetites of convicts which led to widespread prostitution among women and sexual depravity among men.⁴⁹ In that legacy was an enduring resonance, which shaped literary and historical narratives about the penal colonies for decades thereafter.⁵⁰ But to what degree did people living in Van Diemen's Land recognise that picture of their society? The cruel crime ridden colony which was depicted in the Molesworth Committee's evidence bore little resemblance to the Van Diemen's Land of the 1830s and 40s where settlers and visitors remarked on the low crime rates and relative safety in which they went about their daily lives.⁵¹ One witness to the Molesworth Committee whose evidence failed to sway the hearing was D Heath Esquire who assured the

⁴⁷ Daniels, 'Prostitution in Tasmania', in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 49.

⁴⁸ Daniels, 'Prostitution in Tasmania', in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 31.

⁴⁹ Reid, *Gender, crime and empire*, pp.174-175.

⁵⁰ Reid, *Gender, crime and empire*, p. 175.

⁵¹ Louisa A Meredith, *My Home in Tasmania During a Residence of Nine Years*, vols. 1 and 11 (Swansea, Tasmania, 2003 [London, 1852]), pp. 35-36, 47; David Burn, *A Picture of Van Diemen's Land* (Hobart, 1973 [first published as, 'Van Diemen's Land', in *The Colonial Magazine* of 1840-1841]), p. 10.

committee that, 'The colony may be traversed from one end to the other, by day or night, with the most perfect safety.'⁵² The founding members of the Society for the Suppression of Vice were asked by the editor of the *Colonial Times*,

does there exist such a pressing necessity for its formation? Although it cannot be denied that the evil complained of does exist, where, let us ask, is the community in which it so prevails with less repulsive and visible depravity than it does here? The disgusting and shocking scenes ... in London and other large towns in Britain are never witnessed hereto.⁵³

His sentiments may have been more representative of public opinion. It is possible that the historical narrative was the creation of politically motivated factions and less the reality of everyday life in Van Diemen's Land during the first half of the nineteenth century. The constant references to prostitution and brothels, and the casual way in which they were used by the media and politicians, do not support the case for it being a subject of universal concern or disgust. If such abhorrence existed then some taboo would have surrounded the subject, yet that was far from the case. Prostitution was widely referenced and used as a metaphor or a tool with which to approach a multitude of issues. That does not mean that it was uncommon, but on the contrary it was so widespread that people co-existed with the constant reminder of its presence.

In an 1858 sitting of the House of Assembly, T G Gregson, the member for Richmond, was admonished for accusing a fellow member of being dragged out of a brothel.⁵⁴ When Benjamin Falkner complained that Mary Atkinson smashed windows in his house, it was disclosed that the house was a brothel in which Mary's husband squandered the family's income.⁵⁵ Brothels were familiar to the nineteenth-century Vandemonian community. They were frequently mentioned by witnesses in court cases, sometimes as part of a charge, but often as a geographical guide to locating a specific residence or landmark.

⁵² *British Parliamentary Papers Report from the Select Committee on Transportation Together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index, Crime and Punishment, Transportation 2* (Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 268, Appendix no. 10, evidence of D Heath Esquire.

⁵³ *Colonial Times*, 3 May 1842, p. 3.

⁵⁴ *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 5 February 1858, p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Launceston Examiner*, 2 June 1860, pp. 2-3.

And because brothels and prostitution were so ubiquitous within the community, they proved highly effective instruments with which to rally public opinion. They needed no explanation and represented a myriad of understandings which acted as a collective prompt. That familiarity and usage is evident in the frequency with which prostitution was appropriated for a variety of political and social debates. The colonial press often turned to the subject of prostitution to elicit a reaction from readers, while masking an ulterior motive. Prostitution thus became a scapegoat or a vehicle with which to explore other current issues which troubled the society, many of which were the result of its colonial beginnings.

Prostitution was used by the *Colonial Times* to vilify political enemies. Opposition to William Sharland's campaign for re-election to the Legislative Council was expressed in a letter from 'an Elector' to the *Colonial Times*. The author described a schoolmistress who prostituted herself, and while proceeding from the brothel to her own home (the school) was arrested for drunkenness and lodged in the watch house. Upon pleading guilty she was fined five shillings, and allowed to resume her school duties. Sharland was held responsible for a system of education which permitted such behaviour:⁵⁶

a *Brothel Schoolmistress* may rejoice to see a staunch supporter of the present child-destroying system of education returned to Council, but the parents of the children, will have reason in after years to deplore their own insanity, when they witness the conduct of the schoolmistress reflected in that of their children.⁵⁷

Brothels and prostitution were useful weapons.

A newspaper correspondent alerted Launceston residents to the presence of 'houses of ill-fame'. While appealing to those who wished to bring up their families in a decent and respectable manner, it masked an opportunity for editorial criticism of the clergy. The author claimed that brothels had 'increased in Launceston to an incredible extent within the last two years [due to] the professors of religion in Launceston commonly called "the Saints" – who under the mask of religion are notoriously the most immoral

⁵⁶ Peter Ross Eldershaw, 'Frankland, George (1800-1838)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sharland-william-stanley-2650> (11 November, 2012).

⁵⁷ *Colonial Times*, 10 June 1851, p. 2. [Emphasis original].

men in the community'. He continued by saying that they 'enjoyed almost undisturbed, the trade of letting brothels! there are no less than thirteen of these dens of infamy which come within my own knowledge, in this town, let to brothel-keepers, by the meek and starched professors of religion'.⁵⁸

Concern about prostitution became a guise in which to criticise convict officials and their financial mismanagement of the Orphan School. Mr Anstey told the House of Assembly that inadequate funding meant that orphaned girls were prematurely discharged and left to their own resources, after which they were picked up by procuresses and drafted into Hobart Town brothels.⁵⁹

The penal administration also came under fire when a correspondent blamed the gender ratio for increased prostitution within the community. Since the subject was said to be of such a delicate or rather, an indelicate nature, the author promised to be brief in his observations, and cautious in his expressions.⁶⁰ Greater numbers of women would mean less prostitution and adultery, so if more females were transported and married, it would prevent much vice. This strategy was a current preoccupation with the *Colonial Times* because a similar article appeared the following month when it claimed that once a man married, he was no longer susceptible to the arts of the prostitute upon whom he had 'perhaps squandered pounds'.⁶¹

The arts of the prostitute could also be thwarted by the arrival of free immigrant women. So prostitution featured in community debates on immigration. While the positive contribution which immigration made to a growing colony was undeniable, such benefits depended on the character of those new arrivals. The Select Committee on Immigration was alerted to the dangers of an indiscriminate immigration policy. It was told that Pauper Immigration provided 'the most profligate, idle and worthless men and women too, who have every species of vice coupled with vagrancy inherent in their

⁵⁸ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 25 November 1846, p. 911.

⁵⁹ *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 2 November 1858, p. 2.

⁶⁰ *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser*, 1 December 1826, p. 3.

⁶¹ *Colonial Times*, 12 January 1827, p. 3.

dispositions'.⁶² Colonial newspapers provided graphic evidence of that link between prostitution and immigration.

In 1833 the *Hobart Town Courier* published a report from the commissioners investigating the administration and operation of the poor laws of England. Mr Drouet, the Governor of the Lambeth Workhouse, explained that the workhouse had sent eight girls to Van Diemen's Land. They had all been brought up as workhouse children, and were incorrigible prostitutes. The editor expressed his gratitude on behalf of the colony for 'engrafting on our infant society the valuable adjunct of eight incorrigible prostitutes.' He questioned the motives and intended beneficiary of the gesture, asking whether it was to improve the daily comforts of Mr Drouet and the Lambeth workhouse, the personal improvement and reformation of the young ladies, or the colony of Van Diemen's Land? The article concluded with a suggestion that, in the same manner in which runaways were advertised in the *Gazette*, a description of each young lady could be published so that those who chose to pay their addresses could be assisted, and those who wished to avoid them could easily do so.⁶³

Police reports fuelled the immigration debate. When Phoebe Duller was charged with being an idle and disorderly character and a common prostitute, she was identified as 'an unfortunate girl of the *Strathfieldsay*'.⁶⁴ Peter Murdock told the Select Committee on Transportation that prostitutes were very scarce on the streets of Hobart Town before the arrival of the *Princess Royal*, the first female emigrant ship in 1832.⁶⁵ The *Hobart Town Daily Mercury* reported that three young women were apprehended between four and five o'clock in the morning leaving the *Rising Sun*, public house.⁶⁶ They were

⁶² Joan Brown, *Poverty is Not a Crime: The Development of Social Services in Tasmania 1803-1900* (Hobart, 1972), p. 10, citing the Select Committee on Immigration CSO1/528 11502.

⁶³ *Hobart Town Courier*, 27 September 1833, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *Colonial Times*, 25 August 1835, p. 7. The *Strathfieldsay* had brought 286 free females to the colony in 1834.

⁶⁵ *British Parliamentary Papers. Reports from Select Committees on Transportation with minutes of evidence proceedings, appendices and indices. Crime and Punishment. Transportation 3* Shannon [Ireland], 1968), p. 120, evidence of Peter Murdock Esquire. Also *Colonial Times*, 28 January 1834, p. 7, where it was reported that two prostitutes were charged, both 'Princess Royals' and ladies of notoriety in this town. The *Princess Royal* was the first of the female immigrant ships to arrive under the bounty system in September 1832. Governor Arthur was critical of the scheme due to the inclusion of some women whom he believed to be of dissipated habits.

⁶⁶ In 1831 the *Rising Sun* was in Bathurst Street: Royal Society Collection, *The Van Diemen's Land Anniversary and Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1831 with Embellishments* (Hobart Town, 1831 [James Ross]).

accompanied by ten or a dozen men and it was claimed that they had been ‘upon the streets’ almost since their arrival in the colony and that they lived in a brothel in Murray Street. Magistrate Mr. Tarleton described them as a bunch of ‘Bounty Immigrant-girls’ whom the public had paid to bring out to this island.⁶⁷

Concerns about prostitution were a means of exploring many of society’s ills, but in Van Diemen’s Land they also reflected the penal foundations of the colony. Thus the increase in brothels in Launceston in 1846 was not only the work of hypocritical clergy but was also blamed on convict women who married for the sole purpose of operating brothels. Such references were features of the anti-transportation propaganda which was particularly strong in Launceston and dominated sympathetic press such as the *Launceston Examiner*.⁶⁸ Opinion held that the principal mistresses of such dens of infamy were prisoner women who married for that reason.⁶⁹ Yet convict women were doubly damned when, as deserted wives, they were forced into prostitution. This was considered to be the fault of a government which encouraged them to

throw themselves amongst useful members of society ... allowed by the government, at a certain time before they are entitled to a ticket-of leave, the indulgence of becoming the wife of a free man – perhaps a man with a conditional pardon, or with a ticket-of leave.⁷⁰

When the husband departed the colony in search of work his wife was denied the same freedom of movement. The government was therefore culpable for permitting the marriage, and then facilitating its breakdown. The *Launceston Examiner* suggested that if wives were permitted to accompany their husbands, ‘we should not see so many brothels and sinks of iniquity’.⁷¹ The Hobart Benevolent Society concurred, and resolved to petition the Government to prevent husbands leaving the colony, thereby ‘casting their wives and family on the public.’⁷²

⁶⁷ *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 26 May 1860, p. 3.

⁶⁸ John West, *The History of Tasmania with copious information respecting the Colonies of New South Wales Victoria South Australia & etc, & etc, & etc*, A G L Shaw (ed.) (Sydney, 1981 [Launceston, 1852]), p. 613 (footnote 33). The anti-transportation movement began in Launceston.

⁶⁹ *Launceston Examiner*, 18 November 1846, p. 6.

⁷⁰ *Launceston Examiner*, 18 August 1847, p. 5.

⁷¹ *Launceston Examiner*, 18 August 1847, p. 5; Saturday 11 September 1847, p. 2.

⁷² TAHO NS1637/1/1, Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Hobart Benevolent Society, March 1863.

Yet delicate caution was lacking when the *Launceston Examiner* published a letter which questioned the wisdom of heavily policing brothels and prostitution. It asked whether such campaigns against the illicit intercourse of the sexes were injudicious considering the recent outcry against unnatural offences in the colony. A respondent declared that he was not surprised to see so foul an article published in such a journal, and asked what could motivate an individual to suggest that 'houses of ill-fame' should be permitted to exist with impunity.⁷³

A call for greater control and action usually followed anecdotes linking children with prostitution. Daniels believed that by the 1840s concern for the moral welfare of children had assumed greater importance.⁷⁴ The prostitution of children often accompanied a discussion on convict parenting and the deficiencies of convict mothers. Reverend Ewing, Headmaster of the Queen's Orphan School, recounted the case of a woman who removed her daughter from his orphanage for purposes of prostitution when the whalers came to town. The mother was a prostitute and the girl had expressed a desire to follow her career. Ewing knew of others who encouraged their daughters to abscond from the Orphan School to become prostitutes.⁷⁵ However Ewing's evidence was more revealing for its hostility towards the convict population than as a genuine examination of prostitution.

The lack of serious public discussion on the subject, and readiness to use it as a vehicle to promote a variety of other causes, would support the case for apathy and even a tolerance towards prostitution in the first half of the nineteenth century in Van Diemen's Land. And it suggests that unlike the opinions of anti-transportationalists, colonial families did not imagine a licentious prostitute when the convict housemaid waited at their table. Ronald Gunn, Assistant Superintendant of Convicts in Launceston, expressed neither surprise, nor disgust that his assigned servant Jane Torr was involved in prostitution. He had assumed that prostitution provided her with the new clothes

⁷³ *Launceston Examiner*, 11 September 1847, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁴ Daniels, *Convict Women*, p. 209.

⁷⁵ TAHO CSO22/1/50, 'Report and Evidence of a Committee Enquiring into Female Convict Discipline 1841-43', pp. 252-253, evidence of Reverend Ewing.

which she often displayed and a 'great deal of money'.⁷⁶ He had no apparent aversion to a prostitute working for his family.

Prostitution was ubiquitous within the community yet early efforts to police it within the convict population seemed deficient and indifferent. While many used it for their own political purposes, one anonymous writer addressed a pamphlet to 'thoughtful women'.⁷⁷ The author described 'the suffering sisterhood about whom you know little or nothing', and asked readers to 'look on those unfortunates'.⁷⁸ Economic distress was listed as a major cause of prostitution, but the author argued that women suffered more than men because 'men threaten, rebel, and commit violence in such distress but women are violent to themselves'.⁷⁹ A handful of philanthropic individuals responded to such a call in practical ways.

*Such of the fallen as might be induced to abandon their evil courses*⁸⁰

While some women like Sarah Hooker died within weeks of arriving and left few traces in the colony, others like Ellen Lovett returned to prostitution. Some experienced years of poverty and vagrancy. Their interaction with the law is documented, but the degree of contact which these women had with rescue groups is harder to assess. Records shows that rescue work was carried out during the period when women from this study worked as prostitutes in Van Diemen's Land.⁸¹ Refuges and institutions provided moral reform through hard work and Bible reading and later in the century they partially addressed the causes of prostitution through industrial training.⁸² But given the emphasis which was placed on saving young girls, it is questionable how much assistance would have been offered to the aging ex-convict prostitute.

⁷⁶ TAHO GO33/1/8, 'Inquiry into Prostitution at the Launceston General Hospital 1831', p. 650, evidence of Ronald Gunn.

⁷⁷ Allport Library and Museum of Fine Art, Unidentified author, 'One of Four', *Words to Women: a plea for certain sufferers* (Hobart Town, 1858).

⁷⁸ Allport Library and Museum of Fine Art, 'One of Four', *Words to Women*, p. 6.

⁷⁹ Allport Library and Museum of Fine Art, 'One of Four', *Words to Women*, p. 20.

⁸⁰ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 16 August 1876, p. 2.

⁸¹ It is estimated that women in this study who were identified as prostitutes could have practised prostitution in Van Diemen's Land between the years 1822 and 1870.

⁸² Beverley Littlewood and Linda Mahood, 'Prostitutes Magdalenes and Wayward Girls: Dangerous Sexualities of Working Class Women in Victorian Scotland', *Gender & History*, 3 (1991), p.166.

In England philanthropy was largely a women's movement.⁸³ The increasing number of domestic servants meant that the wives and daughters of a newly wealthy middle class lost their former productive role. Charitable deeds, including the rehabilitation of 'fallen women', offered practical opportunities for exercising their influence outside the home. Ministering to the poor and teaching morality and decency required no masculine skills which might challenge their femininity.⁸⁴ Until the 1850s, the majority of influential middle-class colonial women had been born in England and were familiar with that tradition of charitable work.⁸⁵ So philanthropy was 'an essential part of the role they conceived for themselves as a ruling class', and committees represented a 'who's who' of the colonial élite.⁸⁶ By the early nineteenth century it had also become fashionable to support Magdalen hospitals and female penitentiaries.⁸⁷

In Glasgow, Magdalen institutions not only undertook the reform of prostitutes but were part of a wider program to re-make the ideal proletarian.⁸⁸ The aim was to produce an industrial labour force and competent domestic servants. Institutions attempted to reform the inmates' sexual behaviour while at the same time turning them into ideal working-class women – sober, thrifty, chaste, humble and Christian.⁸⁹ The emphasis was on gentility, not with a view to them becoming learned or 'ladies' but to enable them to appreciate the values associated with being a lady and thus prove to be better servants.⁹⁰ Littlewood and Mahood identified a strategy for women to relinquish aspirations to sexual and economic autonomy, so ideally such institutions would have fitted the expectations for convict women following the Bigge Report.⁹¹

⁸³ Elizabeth Windschuttle, 'Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength': The Public Role of Ruling-Class Women in Eastern Australia, 1788-1850', in Elizabeth Windschuttle (ed.), *Women, class and history: feminist perspectives on Australia 1788-1978* (Melbourne, 1980), p. 61.

⁸⁴ Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 8-9.

⁸⁵ Windschuttle, 'Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength', p. 57.

⁸⁶ Windschuttle, 'Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength', p. 69.

⁸⁷ Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London: Prostitution and Control in the Metropolis, 1730-1830* (Harlow, 1999), p. 186.

⁸⁸ Littlewood and Mahood, 'Prostitutes Magdalenes and Wayward Girls', p. 165.

⁸⁹ Littlewood and Mahood, 'Prostitutes Magdalenes and Wayward Girls', p. 172.

⁹⁰ Littlewood and Mahood, 'Prostitutes Magdalenes and Wayward Girls', p. 166.

⁹¹ The strategy following the Bigge report was to initially direct women into private assignment rather than marriage.

Yet as Joan Brown pointed out, in Van Diemen's Land the enthusiasm for charitable endeavour was always short lived and frequently failed to have a significant impact.⁹² The colony possessed many well-intentioned charitable individuals but numerous institutions rose and fell through an inability to harness that charity and benevolence. Government assistance was always needed.⁹³ Perhaps the initial dependence upon Imperial funds which marked the founding of the colony was too deeply entrenched to be superseded by private philanthropy. The subject of prostitution may have been avoided by some new colonists who desired respectability to match their recently acquired wealth and status. Dr Robert Officer who was well respected for his humanitarian treatment of convicts and extensive charity work suggested that the name: Society for the Suppression of Vice, may have given offence to some people.⁹⁴

During the 1830s and 1840s the Temperance Movement was one of the largest social reform movements in Australia.⁹⁵ Van Diemen's Land embraced the temperance cause which was closely linked to the issue of prostitution. Prostitutes could be found in public houses, and it was reasoned that only drink enabled them to endure such a life.⁹⁶ Elizabeth Windshuttle believed that the Temperance Movement was viewed with hostility by the Anglican Church in Britain and since the colonial ruling class was predominantly Anglican it too tended to avoid the temperance cause.⁹⁷ This was also the case in Van Diemen's Land where the dissenting sects, non conformist churches and the Quaker missionaries G W Walker, and James Bonwick pursued this course of philanthropy.⁹⁸ Sarah Crouch was actively involved in benevolent work and after joining the Society of the Friends she campaigned in the causes of temperance and prostitution. Her support extended to the Van Diemen's Land Asylum for the Protection of Destitute and Unfortunate Females.⁹⁹ Yet the extensive work of Mrs Nixon wife of

⁹² Brown, *Poverty is Not a Crime*, p. 11.

⁹³ Brown, *Poverty is Not a Crime*, p. 11.

⁹⁴ *Courier* 29 April 1842, p. 2.

⁹⁵ Stephen Garton, 'Once a Drunkard Always a Drunkard': Social Reform and the Problem of "Habitual Drunkenness in Australia, 1880-1914', *Labour History*, no. 53 (1987), p. 38.

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Windschuttle, 'Women, Class and Temperance: Moral Reform in Eastern Australia 1832-1857', *Push from the Bush*, no. 3 (1979), p. 17.

⁹⁷ Windschuttle, 'Women, Class and Temperance', pp. 9-10.

⁹⁸ Windschuttle, 'Women, Class and Temperance', p. 10. For example George Washington Walker was instrumental in founding the Van Diemen's Land Asylum for the Protection of Destitute and Unfortunate Females.

⁹⁹ Peter Bolger, 'Crouch, George Stanton (1834-1914)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/crouch-george-stanton-3346> (24 October 2012), Sarah Crouch also

the Bishop of Tasmania and governors' wives Lady Denison and Lady Young, suggests that the Anglican Church invested heavily in rescue work in Van Diemen's Land, and that the religious divide was not as marked as in Britain.

Many groups were formed to address the poverty which was exacerbated by the colony's penal beginnings. Where no safety nets of kin or traditional community networks existed, other strategies were needed to tackle poverty and homelessness. The formation of the Hobart Maternal and Dorcas Society was a topic of discussion and great enthusiasm in Hobart Town in 1835 where Mrs Arthur, wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, was its new patroness and 'all respectable Ladies join.'¹⁰⁰ But the rescue of fallen women was not part of its agenda, which was 'to assist destitute married women during the time of their confinement.'¹⁰¹ Unmarried women were not countenanced. In later years ex-convicts were known to have received help from the Hobart Maternal and Dorcas Society as the Colonial Secretary congratulated the ladies on their fine work in saving the government a great deal of expense. He offered to help contribute towards the costs of assisting emancipist women, but required clarification of the ship on which each woman arrived and her maiden name.¹⁰² Whether or not a woman was an emancipist, 'respectability' was a precondition for those receiving help. In 1861 the ladies received a request for 'help in confinement for a very respectable lady whose husband is a retired military man and very deserving.'¹⁰³

Female convicts were the priority in 1841 when Lady Jane Franklin attempted to found the Tasmanian Ladies' Society for the Reformation of Female Prisoners. Press opposition derailed her efforts until the society was revived in 1843, but even then it failed to acknowledge the needs of the most vulnerable women and to provide them with alternatives to prostitution.¹⁰⁴ Her husband Sir John Franklin was however particularly concerned about the prevalence of prostitution when he became president of the newly formed Society for the Suppression of Vice or Magdalen Society.¹⁰⁵ Its

belonged to the Ladies Visiting Committee for female paupers at New Town, Cascades and the Brickfields, and was instrumental in the establishment of a Servants' Home in Hobart Town.

¹⁰⁰ Morris Miller Archives, G4/54, correspondence in the Meredith Collection, 1835.

¹⁰¹ RS1/2/ (1) Minute Book of the Hobart Maternal and Dorcas Society, 1835-1846.

¹⁰² RS1/1/ (19), Colonial Secretary to the Hobart Maternal and Dorcas Society, 1856.

¹⁰³ RS1/1/ (31), Request for assistance to the Hobart Maternal and Dorcas Society, 1861.

¹⁰⁴ Frances J Woodward, 'Franklin, Lady Jane (1791-1875)': *Australian Dictionary of Biography* online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/franklin-lady-jane-2065> (4 September 1012).

¹⁰⁵ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 11 June 1842, p. 2.

objectives were: the suppression of houses of ill-fame; the protection of young females who from the loss or neglect of their natural guardians could be exposed to temptation; to encourage those who may have fallen into vicious habits to relinquish their unhappy course of life; and to provide a Magdalen Asylum for the reception of the penitent.¹⁰⁶ Its ultimate goal was to obtain suitable employment for those who exhibited satisfactory proofs of reformation. The committee largely duplicated the Temperance Society with local church ministers, Quaker philanthropists G W Walker, R Mather, and J Bonwick, and other leading figures such as Drs Officer, Learmonth and Turnbull, and Messrs Hone, Crouch, and Price.¹⁰⁷

Impetus for the society was said to come from several gentlemen who had been eye witnesses to repeated scenes of gross immorality, and were anxious to put an end to such obscene exhibitions. Their benevolence extended to women who had been prostitutes in Britain and had ‘entered with avidity into their former practices.’¹⁰⁸ Some members questioned the degree of success which could be expected of such a society, while others believed that it was injudicious to publicise the need for such an institution. Any claims as to the extensive prevalence of vice were considered to be a libel upon the colony.¹⁰⁹ The Ladies’ Branch of the Society for the Suppression of Vice and Magdalen Asylum, worked to provide lodgings and employment for women and their children, but it failed to establish the proposed Magdalen Asylum.¹¹⁰

The limited success of the society was regretted six years later when its replacement the Van Diemen’s Land Asylum for the Protection of Destitute and Unfortunate Females was formed. The motivation for the new society was almost an echo of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and its stated objectives had a familiar ring in that its members had observed the habits of the lower portion of the population and witnessed instances of a most distressing and revolting nature. Members of the new committee acknowledged that their predecessors had ‘attempted, and for a while not unsuccessfully to meet this evil by the formation of the Magdalen Society in 1842.’¹¹¹ They now

¹⁰⁶ *Colonial Times*, 3 May 1842, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁷ Reverend Mr Lillie in the chair, Dr Officer Honorary Secretary and G W Walker Treasurer.

¹⁰⁸ *Colonial Times*, 3 May 1842, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ *Colonial Times*, 3 May 1842, pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁰ Morris Miller Rare Collection W9/A7 (44), payment to Harriett E Edgar for board and lodgings for Catherine Thornele and her two children, March 1844.

¹¹¹ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 23 August 1848, p. 2; *Launceston Examiner*, 23 August 1848, pp. 2-3.

regrouped with increased earnestness and hope of permanent success. The Lieutenant Governor and Lady Denison were instrumental in that revival and Bishop and Mrs Nixon headed the list of campaigners, many of whom had supported the earlier society. Its objectives were once again to arrest dissolute and unfortunate females on their course to destruction, to rescue them from the vice and misery in which they were involved, and to encourage them in the formation of religious and industrious habits. Premises for a 'House of Refuge' were taken at the upper end of Campbell Street, and Mrs Hobbs was appointed as its Matron.¹¹²

The refuge is recognised as the first home which was founded specifically for prostitutes and the first full institutionalization of rescue work in the colony.¹¹³ It was run by a Ladies' Committee, with Mrs Nixon as its secretary.¹¹⁴ A recurring theme throughout the correspondence and activities of the society was the preference for rescuing the young. Matilda Woodrowe was only thirteen and described as 'depraved and a fit subject for the Magdalen', when she was referred to the Ladies' Committee.¹¹⁵ Older women whose livelihood had been gained on the streets and who had arrived on transports were less likely to be considered. In spite of support from the colonial élite, the difficulty of extracting funds was evident from the onset. When Lady Pedder forwarded her £5 donation, she was emphatic that it was not for an annual subscription but only to establish the asylum. If it proceeded she intimated that she may contribute, but would not specify an amount.¹¹⁶ Again G W Walker worked tirelessly to secure donations, sending out circulars and attempting to tie benefactors into a yearly subscription.¹¹⁷ But by September 1850 it had ceased to operate.¹¹⁸ Agnes Atkinson who was Matron at the time was a victim of the society's financial distress. Over an eight month period following its closure she made repeated requests for her outstanding

¹¹² *Cornwall Chronicle*, 23 August 1848, p. 2; *Launceston Examiner*, 23 August 1848, pp. 2-3.

¹¹³ Brown, *Poverty Is Not a Crime*, p. 94; Daniels, 'Prostitution in Tasmania', in *So Much Hard Work*, p. 47.

¹¹⁴ Morris Miller Rare Collection W9/A7 (1), list of contributors to the Magdalen Society, 1848. One of the donors was William Watchorn. Watchorn Street which bears his name was a very popular site between 1838 and 1861 for women who were to benefit from his contribution.

¹¹⁵ Morris Miller Rare Collection W9/A7 (2), Mrs Cooke, Argyle Street, to the Magdalen Society, 1849.

¹¹⁶ Morris Miller Rare Collection W9/A7 (10), Lady Pedder, Newlands, New Town, to the Magdalen Society [emphasis original], 1849.

¹¹⁷ Morris Miller Rare Collection W9/A7 (25), Balance sheet and general correspondence, 1849.

¹¹⁸ Morris Miller Rare Collection W9/A7 (42), Agnes Atkinson to the Magdalen Society, 1850.

salary.¹¹⁹ Governor Denison eventually made a generous private donation towards the society's many debts.¹²⁰

But Mrs Nixon was not one to 'look on life from drawing room windows'.¹²¹ By December 1855 she had secured the assistance of Lady Young, Mrs Cox and the Reverend F H Cox in opening a new 'House of Refuge for Fallen Women'. This 'Penitent's Home' was established 'in the hope that it may be the means of reclaiming from sin and misery such women as may seek within its walls a place of penitence and safety.'¹²² The Ladies' Committee made an appeal for 'prayers, or alms, or personal service' and stressed that their society, although on a very humble scale was, 'not just a theory.' They aimed to assist women who lived by the wages of sin and who had been labelled as abandoned and outcasts by the moral and virtuous. Support for this new venture would come from the labour of its inmates and private contributions.¹²³

Two years later the *Courier* reported that the home was not a great success but worked quietly and without display. Few even knew of its existence, yet it provided the shelter and encouragements of a home for 'fallen' woman who desired to escape the trammels of vice, and resume the forsaken path of virtue and peace. The Committee believed that although only a few were capable of permanent reform, some had found a temporary refuge within its walls and attempted to exchange idleness and vice for industry and virtue. But again a lack of funds hampered their work.¹²⁴ Joan Brown believes that between 1856 and 1890 four or five such homes failed because the welfare of the prostitute, potential prostitute or unmarried mother was never popular.¹²⁵

That lack of enthusiasm was voiced by the *Cornwall Chronicle* which doubted the wisdom of such endeavours. The newspaper debated a proposal for a reformatory for 'such of the fallen as might be induced to abandon their evil courses and return to the

¹¹⁹ Morris Miller Rare Collection W9/A7 (32 and 42), Agnes Atkinson to the Magdalen Society, 1850-1851.

¹²⁰ Morris Miller Rare Collection W9/A7 (30), General correspondence, 1850.

¹²¹ *Tasmanian Church Chronicle*, monthly supplement to the *Hobart Town Courier*, May 1856, no page numbers.

¹²² *Tasmanian Church Chronicle*, monthly supplement to the *Hobart Town Courier*, May 1856, no page numbers.

¹²³ *Tasmanian Church Chronicle*, monthly supplement to the *Hobart Town Courier*, May 1856, no page numbers.

¹²⁴ *Courier*, Monday 9 November 1857, p. 4.

¹²⁵ Brown, *Poverty Is Not a Crime*, p. 121.

paths of virtue and industry.’¹²⁶ Its editor argued that the inmates did not want to be patronised or branded as fallen women, and in any case it was ill-conceived to establish asylums for the vicious, or hospitals for broken down prostitutes. A better strategy was to look at the causes rather than attempt to reform those who have never been virtuous in the first place. He recommended that the fallen be left to others more able to deal with them, although he failed to identify who precisely were the more able ‘others’. The newspaper warned that such institutions had never succeeded in the past and of all the Magdalen asylums and institutions in British communities, none had achieved its aim. Those observations were correct in that failure in the colony followed the experience of many other places. Maria Luddy found that in Ireland, rescue societies were initially well supported by the public, but interest and support often wavered within a few years.¹²⁷

City Missionary Robert Gray agreed that potential inmates were reluctant to be branded as fallen women and that they resisted entering a penitent’s home. He concurred with the Ladies’ Committee, and told the Select Committee on the Industrial Schools that all ex-prisoner inmates of rescue homes eventually returned to their ‘evil courses’.¹²⁸ The Hobart Town Female Refuge, on whose board he served had been established in 1862 on the old site of the Normal School at New Town.¹²⁹ It opened with four inmates who were to undertake washing and needlework once contracts were secured. The objective was their reform and rehabilitation, and their eventual placement into approved, respectable service. Its population gradually increased, and the Matron regularly reported to the committee that, on the whole, the conduct of its inmates was good considering the idle, dissipated life which they had led.¹³⁰ By September 1863 subscriptions were outstanding and disputes within the committee led to many resignations and once again the initial good intentions failed to translate to long term success.

¹²⁶ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 16 August 1876, p. 2.

¹²⁷ Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society, 1800-1940* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 87.

¹²⁸ *Journals of the Legislative Council*, vii/63, September – October 1862, ‘Report of the Select Committee, Industrial Schools Bill’, p. 8.

¹²⁹ Morris Miller Archives, G3/1(1) Minute Book of the Hobart Town Female Refuge Association, 1862.

¹³⁰ Morris Miller Archives, G3/1(1) Minute Book of the Hobart Town Female Refuge Association, 1862.

The Select Committee on Industrial Schools had pointed to the need for an institution for juvenile female offenders who if not already living by prostitution were at risk of doing so. The Hobart Town Female Refuge was therefore converted to an industrial school under government patronage. It was one of many schools of industry which were established to discourage young girls from entering prostitution.¹³¹ But it offered no relief to aging women of the emancipist class who continued to come before the magistrates on vagrancy and prostitution charges.

Convict women who relied on prostitution or indeed unmarried mothers, found uncertain support within the Hobart and Launceston Benevolent Societies.¹³² A meeting was convened in October 1859 to re-establish the Hobart Benevolent Society. Its stated objectives were ‘to relieve the Poor, the distressed and the afflicted and thereby to discountenance as much as possible mendacity and vagrancy and encourage Industry among the indigent.’¹³³ Prostitutes were not specifically targeted as recipients although they may have received some assistance. When Lavinia Burrell applied to the Ladies’ Committee of the Benevolent Society for relief because her husband was sick, they were warned that she was not married.¹³⁴ The support of destitute pregnant women was a source of great embarrassment and anxiety to the ladies of the committee who informed the Colonial Secretary that the many cases of lying-in and confinement which came before them did not fall within their constitution. The ladies attempted unsuccessfully to have pregnant women admitted to the Cascades Factory as they believed that it was not the intention of their subscribers to provide such support. When funding was forthcoming in the form of a special grant, the proviso was that the recipients were strictly destitute, not of profligate character, and not pregnant a second time. Mary Ann

¹³¹ Windschuttle, ‘Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength’, p. 65; *Journals of the Legislative Council*, vii/63, September – October 1862, ‘Report of the Select Committee, Industrial Schools Bill’, p.5.

¹³² The Launceston Benevolent Society operated from 1834-36, was re-established 1845, and in 1858 both ceased and resumed operation. It closed again in 1863 and according to Kay Daniels it was again operating in 1876. The Hobart Benevolent Society operated from 1832-1839, resumed in 1859 and was still operating in 1874 according to Joan Brown, p. 121; *Hobart Town Courier*, 10 October 1834, p. 3.

¹³³ TAHO NS1637/1/1, Meeting of the Hobart Benevolent Society, October 1859.

¹³⁴ TAHO NS1637/1/1, Minutes of the Hobart Benevolent Society, October 1861.

O'Brien was denied help because her statements were most contradictory and her character was deemed to be 'bad'.¹³⁵

When rescue assistance was available, ex-prostitutes in Van Diemen's Land suffered the same discrimination as their British counterparts. Institutions preferred to admit inmates who were young and who they considered were not yet hardened in the ways of vice.¹³⁶ They were perceived as easier to reclaim, and a more rewarding subject than the hardened prostitute.¹³⁷ Industrial training came too late in Van Diemen's Land to redress that initial disadvantage which had forced them into prostitution and crime.

Conclusion

In spite of the limitations which are inherent in convict records, they have provided some significant insights into the relationship between convict women and prostitution in early Van Diemen's Land. Charges which related to prostitution among women, who had been identified as prostitutes prior to transportation, were overwhelmingly incurred by ticket-of-leave holders. They were five times more likely to be involved in prostitution than other women who were under sentence. Thus prostitution again became a necessary means of economic survival for women once assignment had ended.

Women who were identified as prostitutes in Britain were twice as likely to be charged with colonial offences which related to prostitution (using the four original categories) than those who had no prior history of prostitution. Therefore women who had previously worked as prostitutes were more likely to return to prostitution in the colony. Their years in assignment provided a respite but once that support was removed, prostitution again became a means of survival. Assignment failed to equip them with adequate long term skills. They emerged still unskilled and into a weak labour market. The women never escaped those initial disadvantages which drove them to prostitution

¹³⁵ TAHO NS1637/1/1, Quarterly meeting of the General Committee of the Hobart Benevolent Society, 13 July 1863; Hobart Benevolent Society to the Colonial Secretary, July 1863, October 1863, September 1863.

¹³⁶ Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*, p. 83, citing *Report of the Committee of the Dublin Female Penitentiary to the General Meeting* (1815), p. 19

¹³⁷ Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*, p. 84.

in the first place. But unlike their unskilled male counterparts, they at least did have a survival strategy to fall back upon.

The policing of prostitution and sexual misconduct was often by default, when women were charged with offences which subverted the convict system. This feature of policing coincided with a community apathy towards prostitution in the first half of the nineteenth century. If the strict criteria which were expressed in records of rescue and benevolent societies were upheld, convict women could have few expectations of assistance. The rescue of 'fallen' women was never a popular cause. Industrial schools were specifically aimed at the young but by the time they were introduced women in this cohort no longer fitted the criteria for entry. Lacking the safety net of the convict system, women returned to prostitution. When that was no longer an option, their life became a cycle of vagrancy, drunkenness and short term incarceration.

CONCLUSION

Historians approach their subject through certain procedures of historical scholarship. Stuart Macintyre described the process whereby relevant evidence is assembled, assessed and set in context.¹ Throughout this process the historian has an obligation to remain objective. Yet a vow of objectivity does not disqualify the historian from anticipating the end result. In other words an ‘expected’ result precedes an ‘observed’ result. In the case of this study, the evidence which was assembled was expected to show that the number of women who had previously been identified as prostitutes was greatly exaggerated. Moreover, it was thought likely that the identification of female convicts as prostitutes was part of the same mindset which had erroneously placed transported convicts into a criminal class. That same assembled evidence would ultimately prove inadequate to determine whether the women were in fact prostitutes at all. And if by chance it could be proven for some, then there would be few means of determining how typical these women were. The evidence assembled for this study failed all of these expectations.

The first unexpected discovery was that historians had previously underestimated the potential number of prostitutes who were transported to Van Diemen's Land. In all, 30.8 per cent of convict women landed in Hobart Town in the assignment period have records that in some way identified them as former sex workers. They appeared to be singled out by authorities who ensured that their engagement in prostitution was documented and in some cases repeated on progressive record sets.

The realisation that three precise terms had been recorded by administrative authorities across multiple records in order to denote prostitution provided the means to examine the context for the usage of these descriptors. The thesis examined the records of 1,779

¹ Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Melbourne, 2004), p. 11.

women identified as former sex workers and found that they differed in some respects from other transported women. They were a discrete group in that they were young, single and had fewer children. Nearly two thirds were tried in large urban centres and they possessed fewer specialised skills than transported women who were not labelled as prostitutes. In all, 71 per cent of prostitutes who arrived in Van Diemen's Land were domestic servants compared to 53 per cent of non-prostitutes. The crimes which brought them to Van Diemen's Land overwhelmingly involved the theft of money and usually from their male clients.

While it was clear that women who had practiced prostitution had characteristics which separated them from the bulk of convict women, there was little to indicate that this influenced the way that they were treated on board the transport vessels that carried them to Van Diemen's Land. Women who had been prostitutes arrived at the transports with a few possessions, possibly some money and in a few cases with children. No specific instructions were issued concerning prostitutes. When women were divided into messes there was no segregation of prostitutes, nor were they exempted from holding positions such as matron of the prison, nurse or cook. They learnt to read and write, and they stitched and plaited to pass the time at sea just like other convict women.

The surgeon-superintendent documented no aversion to treating former prostitutes and showed no bias when recording comments on their character, praising many for their good conduct during the voyage. His judgements were influential in determining the women's future. But the women who had been prostitutes presented a different medical profile. They were more likely to suffer from a sexually transmitted disease than their non-prostitute counterpart which probably explains the greater likelihood of treatment for former prostitutes within the 15 to 24 age group. If venereal disease were excluded from the count then prostitutes may indeed be healthier than the general female population.

At the conclusion of the voyage female convict labour was allocated to private settler households. No documentary evidence exists to suggest that women were categorised according to a past history of prostitution. Rather it was skills which determined their future. A form of discrimination did operate at this level because the lack of highly desirable skills rendered former prostitutes less valuable as servants. The report from

the surgeon-superintendent was influential, but he had expressed no particular aversion to women labelled as prostitutes. In most cases prostitutes were guaranteed employment in the colony, which had not been the case in Britain. Critically, information about former prostitution was removed from the skills section of the convict record keeping system, and entered instead on the convict's conduct record. This information was not provided to the officials who allocated convict labour nor to the masters and mistresses who managed assigned servants.

Former prostitutes were assigned to a variety of roles including nursery maids with responsibility for settlers' children, which suggested that their background of prostitution was either unknown or irrelevant. They were also assigned to, and worked closely with, colonial gentlewomen as is evident by the conflict which often arose over household tasks and possessions. But former prostitutes were less valued than more skilled servants whose breaches of discipline were more likely to be overlooked, and as a result were more likely to be charged with an offence. There is little to indicate that they were treated any differently from unskilled female convicts with no prior record of prostitution.

Just as there appeared to be no reluctance to assign women who had previously worked as prostitutes, there was no strong community outcry against prostitution in Van Diemen's Land. Once assignment had ended however it was evident that many former prostitutes had difficulty transitioning into the waged labour force. Thus they faced the same challenges and deficiencies which had pushed many of them into prostitution in Britain. Assignment did not provide them with more choices and post servitude many fell back on their old trade as the system failed them. In that respect however, they had resources which were not available to unskilled transported men.

Some transported prostitutes became wives and mothers, although marriage was not an alternative to prostitution. The outcomes for the 1,779 women who made up this study are manifold. Many married and departed the colony when they received their free certificate. Others like Eliza Waterman and Sarah Lythgow were reunited with their husbands and raised families in Tasmania. Some women who could not obtain a 'settlement' in Britain finally they got their settlement in Van Diemen's Land. The identification of these women offers a unique opportunity for further research to track

their life courses post transportation. More particularly it suggests an examination of the health outcomes for the women and their descendants. Preliminary investigation of colonial marriage patterns for women in this study has revealed a high rate of marriage. Given their age that is to be expected, but it also suggests that a history of prostitution did not render women ineligible for marriage.

So why were women questioned about prostitution in gaol, during the voyage to Australia and upon arrival, and why was the information retained on their record? The first part of the question is simply answered. They were not questioned about prostitution. Women were not asked ‘have you been on the town?’ but rather, ‘what was your last means of support?’ There was no deliberate focus on prostitution in the interrogation process; it was only volunteered because it was their last trade or at least one of the ways in which they had sought to gain income. At the end of the interrogation, the received information went in two directions: onto the conduct record or the description list. Since it was not a trade which could be offered to colonial households (at least officially), it was not entered onto the description list.

In Britain in the early nineteenth century social investigation and data collection were privileged. The counting of prostitutes was commonplace as part of that wave of investigation and analysis. It is thus not surprising that such information was also recorded in the colony, particularly when the number of weeks or months that women spent on the town was also volunteered. But in Van Diemen's Land there was not the fraternity of social investigators to make use of the information. It was obvious from the commencement of this study that information on prostitution was not used. Nowhere in the women's history does it figure in any documented decision making. In fact the only people who have ever used the information are historians. They have looked at the annotation and made a number of assumptions. It has been assumed that prostitutes were such an incorrigible outcast group that authorities found it necessary to highlight and track their presence. Later generations have judged the convict women who were identified as prostitutes in a way which their contemporaries never did.

The fact that prostitutes were not treated any differently to other women supports the case that in the early nineteenth century prostitution did not possess the same stigma which horrified later Victorians. Being labelled as a prostitute on their convict records

was no more significant than being labelled as a thief. Later readers endowed it however, with considerable significance. The candour which prostitutes displayed when they declared the length of time they had been engaged in prostitution shows that they felt no urge to lie or disguise their trade. It is possible that when reference to prostitution appeared on a woman's record in Britain, colonial questioning may have provided a convenient field to check the consistency of the woman's evidence and whether she was telling the truth generally.

In some ways, women who had previously worked as prostitutes differed from other transported women. Yet that differentiation is insufficient evidence to relegate them to a category based on 'badness'. Former prostitutes cannot credibly be used as a measuring stick with which to exculpate the reputation of the remaining female convict population. Colonial officials made no such judgement and colonial records offer no grounds for making that distinction. The statistical pursuit of the prostitute has confirmed what her contemporaries in Van Diemen's Land already knew.

APPENDICES

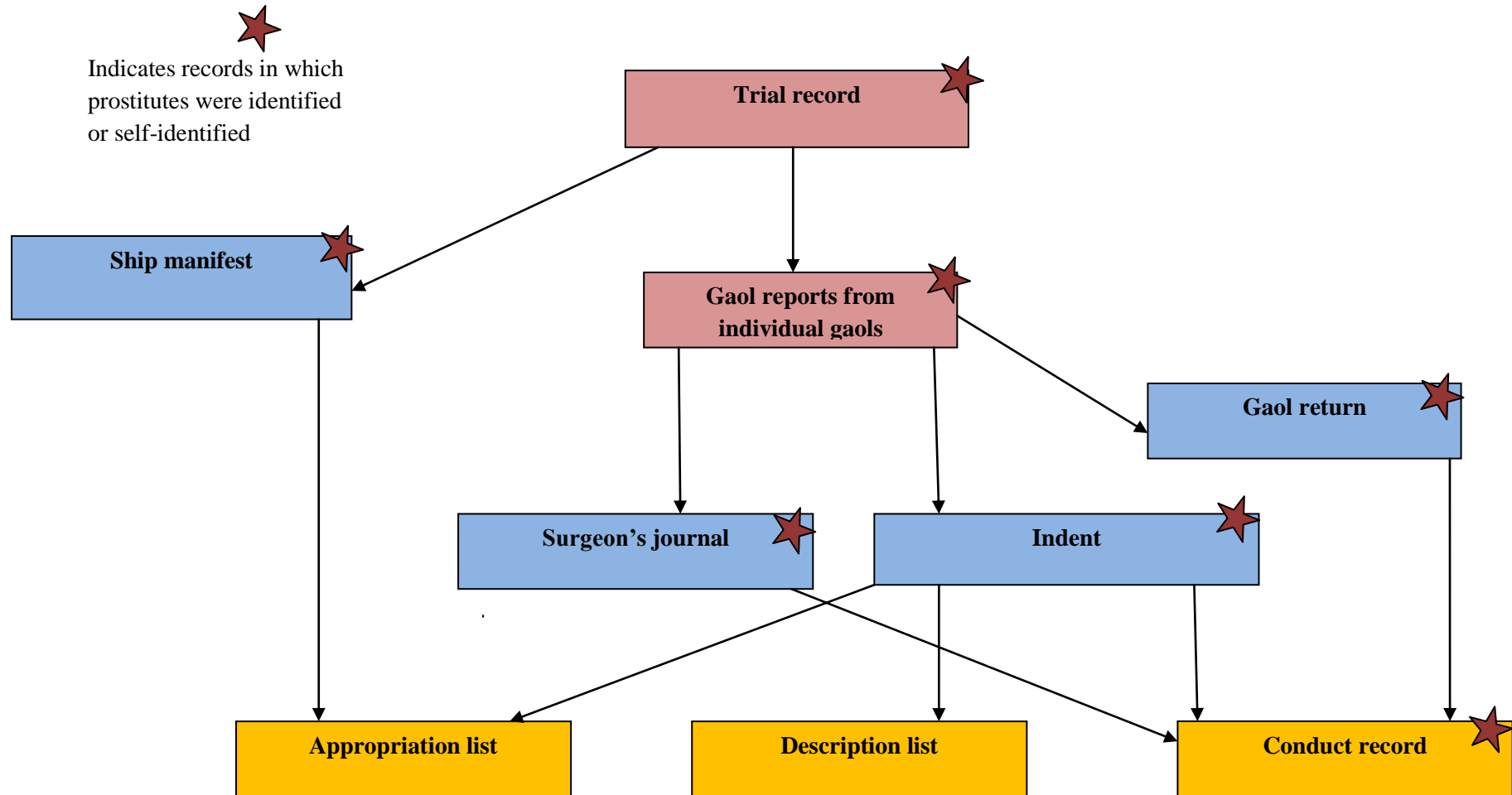
Appendix A: Women identified as prostitutes who arrived in Van Diemen's Land 1822-1843

Arrived	Ship	Departed	% Prostitutes
1822	<i>Mary Anne</i>	Portsmouth	22
1823	<i>Mary</i>	London	15
1824	<i>Brothers</i>	Downs	14
1825	<i>Henry</i>	London	22
1825	<i>Midas</i>	London	9
1823	<i>Providence</i>	Downs	35
1827	<i>Persian</i>	London	40
1827	<i>Sir Charles Forbes</i>	London	35
1827	<i>Sovereign</i>	London	40
1828	<i>Borneo</i>	London	34
1828	<i>Mermaid</i>	Woolwich	72
1829	<i>Harmony</i>	Downs	45
1829	<i>Lady of the Lake</i>	Woolwich	27
1830	<i>Eliza</i>	London	17
1830	<i>Mellish</i>	Spithead	27
1831	<i>America</i>	Downs	39
1831	<i>Mary</i>	Woolwich	23
1832	<i>Hydery</i>	Plymouth	28
1833	<i>Frances Charlotte</i>	Downs	23
1833	<i>Jane</i>	Torbay	46
1833	<i>William Bryan</i>	London	22
1834	<i>Edward</i>	Woolwich	24
1835	<i>Hector</i>	London	49
1835	<i>New Grove</i>	Scilly Is.	12
1836	<i>Arab</i>	London	38
1836	<i>Westmoreland</i>	Woolwich	39
1837	<i>Platina</i>	London	13
1838	<i>Atwick</i>	London	28
1838	<i>Nautilus</i>	Woolwich	52
1839	<i>Hindustan</i>	Sheerness	48
1839	<i>Majestic</i>	London	28
1840	<i>Gilbert Henderson</i>	London	28
1841	<i>Garland Grove</i>	London	26
1841	<i>Mary Anne</i>	Dublin	25
1841	<i>Mexborough</i>	Dublin	11
1841	<i>Navarino</i>	Downs	38
1841	<i>Rajah</i>	Sheerness	27
1842	<i>Emma Eugenia</i>	Woolwich	44
1842	<i>Hope</i>	Dublin	32
1842	<i>Royal Admiral</i>	Woolwich	27
1842	<i>Waverley</i>	Dublin	29
1843	<i>East London</i>	Dublin	18
1843	<i>Garland Grove</i>	Woolwich	28
1843	<i>Margaret</i>	London	28
1843	<i>Woodbridge</i>	London	31

1779 women labelled as prostitutes arrived on 45 ships
30.8 per cent

Source: TAHO CON40; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101, Reels 3187-3213; TAHO CON15; ML TP 4-9, 11, 21-25, D3-5; Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships 1787-1868* (Artarmon [New South Wales], 197

Appendix B: Flow chart of record linkages



Appendix C: Age distribution of female convict population and women identified as prostitutes

Age range	<u>Leppard nos.</u>	<u>Leppard %</u>	<u>Oxley nos.</u>	<u>Oxley %</u>
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
0-14	0	0	42	0.6
15-19	430	24.5	1151	17
20-24	843	48	2168	32.1
25-29	352	20	1396	20.7
30-34	96	5.5	803	11.9
35-39	26	1.5	443	6.6
40-44	7	0.4	356	5.3
45-49	2	0.1	172	2.5
50+	2	0.1	227	3.4
	1758	100	6758	100

Source: Oxley, *Convict Maids*, p. 256; TAHO CON 15; TAHO CON 19; PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101

Appendix D: Counties where female convicts were tried

Place	Leppard Sample		Robson Sample	
	Nos	%	Nos	%
London/Middlesex	545	30.6	257	20
Lancashire	244	13.7	99	8
Yorkshire	91	5.1	30	3
Midlothian	89	5	29	3
Lanarkshire	67	3.8	44	4
Surrey	54	3	24	2
Warwickshire	54	3	25	2
Devon	47	2.6	21	2
Gloucestershire	40	2.2	25	2
Somerset	31	1.7	19	2
Antrim	27	1.5	17	2
Cheshire	27	1.5	21	2
Kent	27	1.5	14	2
Staffordshire	25	1.4	13	2
Northumberland	24	1.3	10	1
Dublin	23	1.3	88	7
Aberdeenshire	22	1.2	9	1
Worstershire	22	1.2	14	2
Hampshire	17	1	10	1
Leicestershire	14	0.8	5	0.5
Perthshire	14	0.8	15	2
Essex	13	0.7	5	0.5
Norfolk	12	0.7	11	1
Cambridgeshire	11	0.6	4	0.5
Cork	11	0.6	54	4
Tyrone	10	0.6	16	2
Herefordshire	9	0.5	5	0.5
Oxfordshire	9	0.5	8	1
Northamptonshire	8	0.4	2	0.5
Nottinghamshire	8	0.4	11	1
Sussex	8	0.4	6	0.5
Cumberland	7	0.4	5	0.5
Dumfriesshire	7	0.4	1	0.5
Meath	7	0.4	9	1
Suffolk	7	0.4	5	0.5

Place	Leppard Sample		Robson Sample	
	Nos	%	Nos	%
Ayrshire	6	0.3	2	0.5
Cavan	6	0.3	9	1
Cornwall	6	0.3	6	0.5
Down	6	0.3	16	2
Shropshire	6	0.3	n/a	n/a
Derbyshire	6	0.3	5	0.5
Armagh	5	0.3	13	2
Galway	5	0.3	20	2
Lincolnshire	5	0.3	7	1
Monmouthshire	5	0.3	n/a	n/a
Sligo	5	0.3	2	0.5
Waterford	5	0.3	6	0.5
Wiltshire	5	0.3	6	0.5
Dorset	4	0.3	2	0.5
Durham	4	0.3	4	0.5
Fermanagh	4	0.3	8	1
Leitrim	4	0.3	3	0.5
Limerick	4	0.3	25	2
Longford	4	0.3	5	0.5
Queens	4	0.3	5	0.5
Roxburghshire	4	0.3	n/a	n/a
Wicklow	4	0.3	10	1
Berkshire	3	0.2	2	0.5
Carlow	3	0.2	6	0.5
Denbighshire	3	0.2	n/a	n/a
Stirlingshire	3	0.2	4	0.5
Glamorgan	2	0.1	n/a	n/a
Glamorganshire	2	0.1	n/a	n/a
Kerry	2	0.1	10	1
Kilkenny	2	0.1	7	1
Londonderry	2	0.1	5	0.5
Louth	2	0.1	4	0.5
Monaghan	2	0.1	10	1
Westmeath	2	0.1	5	0.5
Brecknockshire	1	0.1	n/a	n/a
Buckinghamshire	1	0.1	nil	nil
Caernarfonshire	1	0.1	n/a	n/a
Clare	1	0.1	10	1

Leppard Sample			Robson Sample	
Place	Nos	%	Nos	%
Drogheda	1	0.1	n/a	n/a
Inverness-shire	1	0.1	2	0.5
Kildare	1	0.1	8	1
Mayo	1	0.1	11	1
Montgomeryshire	1	0.1	n/a	n/a
Pembrokeshire	1	0.1	n/a	n/a
Tipperary	1	0.1	16	2
Wexford	1	0.1	10	1
Unknown	1	0.1	2	0.5

Source: Robson, *The Convict Settlers of Australia*, p. 186 (1,248 records); Leppard: TAHO CON40 (1,779 records)

Appendix E: List of ships used to examine women's trades

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ship</u>
1829	<i>Harmony</i>
1829	<i>Lady of the Lake</i>
1831	<i>America</i>
1833	<i>Frances Charlotte</i>
1834	<i>Edward</i>
1837	<i>Platina</i>
1838	<i>Nautilus</i>
1839	<i>Majestic</i>
1840	<i>Gilbert Henderson</i>
1841	<i>Navarino</i>
1841	<i>Mary Anne</i>
1841	<i>Rajah</i>
1842	<i>Emma Eugenia</i>

Source: TAHO CON 19 Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853

Appendix F: Breakdown of broad trade categories

Category	Trades included
A: Specialised domestic	Cook Governess Housekeeper Ladies' maid Laundress Midwife Nurse Washerwoman
B: Domestic	Housemaid Kitchen maid Laundry maid Nursery maid/girl Plain cook Servant Servant of all work Charwoman
C: Needle skills	Dressmaker Stay-maker Hat trimmer Hatter Milliner Needlewoman Shoe-binder Straw bonnet maker Tailoress Tambour worker
D: Country	Dairy maid Farm servant
E: Factory and Industrial	Cotton reeler Furrier Nailor Net maker Potter Silver burnisher Spinner Weaver - all types Factory Worker Silk industry
F: No trade/unclassified	Child Miscellaneous Nil

Source: TAHO CON19 Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853

Appendix G: Trades of women who arrived in Van Diemen's Land 1829-1842

Trade	Prostitute (no)	Prostitute (%)	Non- prostitute (no)	Non- prostitute (%)
Charwoman	0	0	3	0.2
Child	0	0	2	0.2
Cook	5	0.8	48	3.8
Cotton reeler	0	0	1	0.1
Dairy maid	6	1	25	2
Dressmaker/stay-maker	10	1.7	35	2.8
Farm servant	27	4.5	86	6.9
Furrier	2	0.3	1	0.1
Governess	0	0	3	0.2
Hat trimmer	0	0	2	0.2
Hatter	0	0	1	0.1
Housekeeper	0	0	4	0.3
Housemaid	294	49.4	460	36.8
Kitchen maid	10	1.7	8	0.6
Ladies maid	0	0	5	0.4
Laundress	10	1.7	58	4.6
Laundry maid	3	0.5	16	1.3
Midwife	0	0	1	0.1
Milliner/bonnet maker	0	0	8	0.6
Miscellaneous	2	0.3	4	0.3
Nailor	1	0.2	1	0.1
Needlewoman	12	2	26	2.1
Net maker	0	0	1	0.1
Nil	5	0.8	34	2.7
Nurse	4	0.7	10	0.8
Nursery maid/girl	37	6.2	59	4.7
Plain cook	23	3.9	104	8.3
Potter	2	0.3	1	0.1
Servant	87	14.6	161	12.9
Servant of all work	42	7.1	45	3.6
Shoe-binder	4	0.7	11	0.9
Silver burnisher	1	0.2	0	0
Spinner	0	0	1	0.1
Stocking weaver	0	0	1	0.1
Straw bonnet maker	1	0.2	4	0.3
Tailoress	1	0.2	5	0.4
Tambour worker	0	0	2	0.2
Washerwoman	0	0	6	0.5
Weaver - all types	4	0.7	4	0.3
Factory Worker	0	0	1	0.1
Silk industry	2	0.3	3	0.2
	595	100	1251	100

Source: TAHO CON19 Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853

Appendix H: Prostitutes appointed as monitors on board ships

Name	Ship	Year	Age	Primary trade	Role
Elizabeth Taylor	<i>Sovereign</i>	1827	25	Housemaid	Head of mess
Rebecca Hall	<i>Harmony</i>	1829	24	Servant of all work	Cook
Esther Matthews	<i>Harmony</i>	1829	26	House maid	Schoolmistress
Maria Dowling	<i>Hydery</i>	1832	27	House maid	Schoolmistress
Catherine Williams	<i>Mermaid</i>	1828	35	Laundress	Sick attendant
Mary Ann Guy	<i>Lady of the Lake</i>	1829	23	Servant of all work	Overseer on prison deck
Phillis Lockyer	<i>Majestic</i>	1839	18	House servant	Galley assistant
Hannah Whitely	<i>Mary Anne</i>	1822	28	Milliner	Schoolmistress
Ann Dyer	<i>Rajah</i>	1841	22	House maid	Mess Woman
Mary Hampson	<i>Rajah</i>	1841	22	House maid	Assistant Cook
Ann Wright	<i>Rajah</i>	1841	23	Plain cook	Ship Woman
Ann Fitzhenry	<i>Sir Chas. Forbes</i>	1827	40	Shoe binder	Supervise cleaning the prison
Sarah Forward	<i>Sir Chas. Forbes</i>	1827	20	Wash & cook	Nurse for three orphans
Mary Murphy (2)	<i>Westmoreland</i>	1836	27	Laundry maid	Cook
Harriet Hague	<i>Westmoreland</i>	1836	22	Plain cook	Matron
Hannah Covington	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	28	House maid	Matron of Lower Deck
Mary Croft	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	21	House maid	Matron of Mess
Caroline Cosgrove	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	20	House maid	Matron of Prison
Maria Crowther	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	25	House servant	Head of Mess
Deborah Hawkins	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	24	Umbrella maker	Head of Mess
Margaret Matthews	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	30	Plain cook	Head of Mess
Hannah Moore	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	30	House maid	Head of Mess
Mary Newland	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	25	House maid	Matron of Prison
Rosina Rennie	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	26	Laundress	Head of Mess
Mary Masterton	<i>Hope</i>	1842	21	Housemaid	Nurse
Mary Keating	<i>Hope</i>	1842	22	Country servant	Nurse
Martha Montgomery	<i>Nautilus</i>	1838	35	House servant	Nurse

Source: PRO (AJCP) Adm. 101 Surgeons' journals; TAHO CON19 Description lists of female convicts 1828-1853; TAHO CON40 Conduct registers

**Appendix I: List of ships used to examine the medical treatment of
female convicts**

Year	Ship
1829	<i>Harmony</i>
1831	<i>America</i>
1831	<i>Mary</i>
1832	<i>Hydery</i>
1833	<i>William Bryan</i>
1834	<i>Edward</i>
1835	<i>New Grove</i>
1836	<i>Arab</i>
1836	<i>Westmoreland</i>
1838	<i>Atwick</i>
1838	<i>Nautilus</i>
1839	<i>Majestic</i>
1840	<i>Gilbert Henderson</i>
1841	<i>Mary Anne</i>
1841	<i>Rajah</i>
1842	<i>Emma Eugenia</i>
1842	<i>Hope</i>
1842	<i>Royal Admiral</i>
1842	<i>Waverley</i>
1843	<i>Garland Grove</i>
1843	<i>Margaret</i>
1843	<i>Woodbridge</i>

Source: PRO (AJCP) Adm.101

Appendix J: Surgeons' reports for women treated for venereal disease

Name	Ship	Year	Surgeon's comment
<u>Prostitutes</u>			
Margaret Stewart	<i>America</i>	1831	Very good
Alice Dowland	<i>Arab</i>	1836	Good
Jane Marshall	<i>Arab</i>	1836	tolerable
Sarah Mary Taylor	<i>Emma Eugenia</i>	1842	Tolerably Good
Mary Hollings	<i>Emma Eugenia</i>	1842	Tolerably Good
Mary Murphy	<i>Garland Grove</i>	1843	a Giddy Girl but has a Remarkable Good Memory with Care may turn out well
Janet Torens	<i>Lady of the Lake</i>	1829	Sluggish and filthy and of a violent temper
Eliza Woodman	<i>Nautilus</i>	1838	well behaved & of mild disposition
Mary Neilly	<i>Nautilus</i>	1838	extremely well behaved and of a particularly mild Temper
Mary Smith	<i>Nautilus</i>	1838	punished for striking perverse & quarrelsome swears
Mary Cardwell/Cordwell	<i>Navarino</i>	1841	Orderly
Johannah Cooper	<i>Navarino</i>	1841	middling
Margaret Leah	<i>Navarino</i>	1841	orderly
Charlotte Williams	<i>Persian</i>	1827	Orderly
Jane Brickhill	<i>Providence</i>	1826	Conducted herself with credit. Never at any time incurred my displeasure
Mary Ghee Mc	<i>Royal Admiral</i>	1842	Bad
Helen Fraser	<i>Westmoreland</i>	1836	Indifferent
Eliza Reay/Rea	<i>Westmoreland</i>	1836	very bad
Sarah Marvin	<i>Westmorland</i>	1836	Bad
Elizabeth Hopper	<i>Wm Bryan</i>	1833	good
Jane Teasdale	<i>Wm Bryan</i>	1833	Good
Harriet Donough/ Mc Donald	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1843	fair
<u>Non-Prostitutes</u>			
Mary Creed	<i>Edward</i>	1834	Very bad
Harriet Baker	<i>Emma Eugenia</i>	1842	Tolerably Good
Winifred Cook	<i>Hope</i>	1842	Generally quiet and orderly
Jane Ford	<i>Navarino</i>	1841	a great thief
Elizabeth Craig	<i>Royal Admiral</i>	1842	Good
Margaret Anderson	<i>Royal Admiral</i>	1842	Good
Ann Bostock	<i>William Bryan</i>	1833	Indifferent
Ann Dunn	<i>Woodbridge</i>	1842	Good

Source: TAHO CON40

Appendix K: List of ships used to examine assignment patterns

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ship</u>
1826	<i>Providence</i>
1827	<i>Sir Charles Forbes</i>
1827	<i>Sovereign</i>
1829	<i>Harmony</i>
1829	<i>Lady of the Lake</i>
1831	<i>America</i>
1833	<i>Frances Charlotte</i>
1834	<i>Edward</i>
1837	<i>Platina</i>
1838	<i>Nautilus</i>
1839	<i>Majestic</i>
1840	<i>Gilbert Henderson</i>
1841	<i>Rajah</i>
1841	<i>Navarino</i>
1841	<i>Mary Anne</i>
1842	<i>Emma Eugenia</i>

Source: TAHO CON40 (records of 686 women identified as prostitutes)

Appendix L: Households which received female servants

Master	Total women assigned	Number of prostitutes
Government House	24	5
Spode, J Esquire & Mrs	11	1
Lascelles, T Esquire	10	3
Curr, E Esquire	10	2
Bedford, Reverend	10	1
Ross, Dr	9	4
Brock, Dr	9	3
Walker, Thomas Esquire	9	3
Emmett, H Esquire & Mrs (Tamar)	9	2
Gordon, James Esquire & Mrs	9	2
Frankland, G Esquire & Mrs	9	0
Archer, T Esquire (Woolmers & Lake River)	8	4
Kemp, A & Mrs	8	4
Gunning, G Esquire	8	3
Dermer, Dr	8	2
Bastian, N (Woodstock, Richmond, New Norfolk)	7	4
Logan C Esquire & Mrs (Macquarie Street)	7	4
Archer, W	7	3
Clark, Captain (Clyde)	7	2
Desailley, Dr & Mrs	7	2
Hamilton, W Esquire (Argyle Street)	7	2
Hudson, Joseph & Mrs (Launceston & Hobart)	7	1
Secombe, Dr	6	5
Barker, R (Macquarie Plains)	6	4
Darling, Mrs (Bagdad & Patrick Street)	6	4
Cartwright, Geo Esquire	6	3
Evans, G F (Davey Street)	6	3
Burnett, Mr & Mrs (New Norfolk)	6	1
Gray, Major (Avoca)	6	1
Priaulx, Mr & Mrs	5	4
Carter, Mr & Mrs (New Town)	5	3
Allison, Mr, Mrs, & Captain	5	2
Gregson, T	5	2
Morgan, J	5	2
Read, Captain	5	2
Wilmore, Mr & Esquire (Norfolk Plains)	5	2
Ashburner, Mr & Dr	5	1
Ballantyne, D Mr & Mrs (Kenmore)	5	1
Bell, Captain	5	1

Master	Total women assigned	Number of Prostitutes
Boyd, Mr A (Brisbane Street)	5	1
Burnett, J Esquire (Colonial Secretary)	5	1
Elliston, W Esquire	5	1
Glover, Mr J & Mrs	5	1
Jellicoe, Mr H	5	1
McLeod, Major	5	1
Montagu, Mr Justice	5	1
Swan, Mr & Mrs (New Town Rd & Elizabeth St)	5	1
Watchorn, Mr William	5	1
Windsor, Mr M (Sandy Bay)	5	1
Abbott, Mr Charles	5	0
Glover, Captain	5	0
Grant, J Esquire & Mrs	5	0
Palmer, Reverend	5	0
Boot, Mr & Mrs (Liverpool & Bathurst Street)	4	3
Crombie, A Esquire	4	3
Gage, Mr & Esquire	4	3
Paton, Dr	4	3
Atkinson, J Esquire	4	2
Burn, Mr G (Coal River)	4	2
Chilton, Mrs (High Plains)	4	2
Johnson, J (Liverpool Street)	4	2
Johnson, William (Bagdad)	4	2
Robinson, Mr G W	4	2
Turnbull, Mr & Esquire	4	2
Lillie, Reverend & Mr	4	1
Lowes, T F	4	1
Maclean, Mr , Geo Esquire & Mrs	4	1
Meredith, G Esquire	4	1
Nichols, H Esquire	4	1
Officer, Dr	4	1
Orton, Reverend	4	1
Parker, Mr J (High Plains)	4	1
Roberts, Mr R (Macquarie Street)	4	1
Sprent, John (Launceston)	4	1
Stephenson, Mr J M (Mowbray)	4	1
Thomas, Jocelyn Esquire	4	1
Underwood, J C Esquire & Mr	4	1
Wilkinson, Mr Edward (Bank)	4	1
Bent, Mr A & Mrs	4	0
Bush, Mr D, Mme & Miss	4	0
Dunn, John Esquire	4	0

Master	Total women assigned	Number of prostitutes
King, Captain, Port Officer	4	0
Mason, Thomas Esquire	4	0
Mawle, Mr & Mrs	4	0
Price, John Esquire	4	0
Reiby, Thomas Esquire	4	0
Turnbull, Dr	4	0
Inkersole	3	3
Walker, John (Pittwater)	3	3
Archer, J Esquire	3	2
Bilton, George	3	2
Brown, Dr & Reverend	3	2
Cahill, Mr, Mrs, Sergeant	3	2
Capon, W	3	2
Douglas, Mr (Ordinance)	3	2
Flegg,	3	2
Houghton, J	3	2
Low, Mr A (Colonial Surgeon's Office)	3	2
Marzette	3	2
Ockerby, Mr	3	2
Scott, Dr	3	2
Stone, Mr Thomas	3	2
Toosey, Esquire & Mrs (VDL Est Cressy)	3	2
Arthur, Mr C & Mrs	3	1
Bogle, Mr & Mrs	3	1
Bostock, Mr R	3	1
Braithwaite, Mr	3	1
Cawthorn,	3	1
Clark, G Esquire	3	1
Davis, Mr J. (Old Wharf)	3	1
Paterson, M. Distillery	3	1
Garrand, Reverend	3	1
Graham, Mr P & Mrs	3	1
Hogan, Mrs M	3	1
Jamieson, Mr D & Mrs	3	1
Jennings, H	3	1
Jennings, J G	3	1
Johnson, W	3	1
Kerr, Miss	3	1
Lightfoot, Mr	3	1
Lord, Mr D & Mrs	3	1

Master	Total women assigned	Number of prostitutes
Mason, H	3	1
Oakes, H Esquire	3	1
Paterson	3	1
Ross, Mr H & Esquire	3	1
Stallard, Mr & Mrs	3	1
Stewart, R P	3	1
Swift, Constable J & AC	3	1
Thomas, Dr & Mrs	3	1
Thomson, A	3	1
Tobin, E Esquire & Mr	3	1
Walker, W G Esquire	3	1
Willis, R Esquire & Mr	3	1
Wood, Captain	3	1
Bailey, Mr J A (New Town Rd)	3	0
Boyes, G T W Esquire & Mrs	3	0
Brown, J A	3	0
Butler, J Esquire & Mr	3	0
Cape, Mr J (Patterson's Plains)	3	0
Darling, A C	3	0
Fletcher, W Esquire	3	0
Gellibrand, Mr & Mrs	3	0
Gregory, John Esquire (Colonial Treasurer)	3	0
Gunn, Lieutenant	3	0
Haig, Captain (New Wharf)	3	0
Harrison, Robert (Woodberry)	3	0
Horne, T Esquire	3	0
Lemprière, Mrs & (Port Arthur)	3	0
Mackersey, Reverend Mr J	3	0
McKinnon, Mr A	3	0
Miller, H Henry Esquire	3	0
Perry, Arthur Esquire	3	0
Pitt, Mr & M P	3	0
Sorell, Mrs	3	0
Stanfield, Thomas	3	0
Stephens, A Esquire	3	0
Tabart, Mr & Esquire	3	0
Bolger, Mrs	2	2
Cruickshank, Lieutenant	2	2
Deane, J P	2	2
Dixon, Thomas	2	2
Foote, Lieutenant	2	2

Master	Total women assigned	Number of prostitutes
Fryett, Mr	2	2
Gray, Wm Esquire & Mr	2	2
Haines, R (George Town)	2	2
McGowan, David	2	2
Patterson, Mr Alexander	2	2
Ross, Mrs	2	2
Towner, Mrs (Patrick Street)	2	2
Wood, Mr James	2	2
Young, Mr (Ouse)	2	2
Ball, G Esquire	2	1
Beaumont, Mr & J Esquire	2	1
Bell, Robert	2	1
Bentham, Mr (Cross Marsh)	2	1
Bradshaw, Mr James (Back River Rd)	2	1
Briggs, Captain, O'Brien's Bridge	2	1
Butcher, Mr Broadmarsh	2	1
Carr, Mr C (Macquarie Street)	2	1
Carvosso, Reverend Mr	2	1
Chapman, H	2	1
Clark, Dr	2	1
Cox, J	3	1
Cox, Mrs	2	1
Cullen Mrs (Hobart)	2	1
Dawson, (Clarence Plains)	2	1
Friend, Captain & Lieutenant	2	1
Gaunt, Mr (Tamar)	2	1
Gilbert, Mr (Liverpool Street)	2	1
Glover, Miss (Hobart)	2	1
Harrison, H (Campbell Town)	2	1
Harrison, P (Jericho)	2	1
Hobler, Mr (Killafaddy)	2	1
Jones, A B Esquire (Westbury)	2	1
Kerr, Mr J F (Hamilton)	2	1
Liston, Mrs	2	1
McRae, John (Restdown)	2	1
Mc Tavish, Mrs	2	1
Minnett, Mr P.	2	1
Morris, Mr B	2	1
Morris, Mrs (Elizabeth Street)	2	1
Murray, Lieutenant	2	1
Nairn, C R	2	1

Master	Total women assigned	Number of prostitutes
Petchey, Mr J	2	1
Powell, Mrs & J (Norfolk Plains)	2	1
Ralston, Mr D	2	1
Reed, Mr Alex (Clyde)	2	1
Roberts, Mrs Judith	2	1
Roberts, Peter	2	1
Robinson, E P (Macquarie Street)	2	1
Robinson, Reverend H	2	1
Schaw, Major	2	1
Sharland, Dr & Mrs (Hamilton)	4	1
Sharland, W S Mr (New Wharf)	2	1
Smith, J G (Circular Head)	2	1
Sorell, W Esquire	2	1
Staples, Mr C (Broadmarsh)	2	1
Vicary, Captain & H	2	1
Walker, J C (Westbury)	2	1
Willis, Mr (Brisbane Street)	2	1
Adey, S Esquire & Mr	2	0
Allenby, Mr J (Pittwater)	2	0
Anstey, Thomas Esquire	2	0
Archer, Ed (Pansanger)	2	0
Atkinson Mrs (New Norfolk)	2	0
Atkinson, Mr T	2	0
Barrow, Lieut (New Norfolk)	2	0
Broadribb, Mr A (Collins Street)	2	0
Campbell, Mr A	2	0
Denham, Mr J A (Tamar)	2	0
Donahoo, Mrs	2	0
Dudgeon, P Esquire	2	0
Dumas, Captain	2	0
Emmett, W	2	0
Erskine, Mrs	2	0
Espie, Dr & George	2	0
Evans, Mr James (Brighton)	2	0
Fitzgerald, Mr (Elizabeth Street)	2	0
Fletcher, Mr Thomas (Lake River)	2	0
Gibbon, Reverend	2	0
Giles, Mr John	2	0
Gillern, De Major & Mrs	2	0
Gleadow, Mr J W	2	0
Glover, C (Hobart)	2	0

Master	Total women assigned	Number of prostitutes
Hector, Mr & Mrs (Coal River)	2	0
Hopkins, H	2	0
Hull, G (New Town)	2	0
Kelly, James & Captain	2	0
Lewis, Mr (King's Yard)	2	0
Lyons, (Solicitor)	2	0
Mac Michael, Richard (Bank)	2	0
Mannington, Mr T	2	0
Martin, John (New Norfolk)	2	0
Melville, Mr Henry	2	0
Moriarty, Captain	2	0
Murray, Mr Hugh (Hobart)	2	0
Murray, R L	2	0
Norman, Reverend (Sorell)	2	0
Patterson, Mr & Mrs (Shannon)	2	0
Piguenet, Mr & Mrs	2	0
Preston, Mrs (Murray Street)	2	0
Roper, F Esquire & Mr	2	0
Rowcroft, Mr H (Norfolk Plains)	2	0
Scott, Thomas Snr (Launceston)	2	0
Simmons, Lieutenant (Hobart)	2	0
Smith, C T (Liverpool Street, Wharf)	2	0
Smith, F Esquire (Coal River)	2	0
Solomon, Mr (Hobart & Launceston)	2	0
Sorell, Mr	2	0
Stieglitz, Mr J (Salt Pan Plains & Avoca)	2	0
Sutherland, J C (Isis)	2	0
Taylor, David (Macquarie River)	2	0
White, Mr Charles (Argyle Street)	2	0
Wilson, Captain	2	0
Young, Thomas, Mr & Esquire (Liverpool St)	2	0
Dean, John (Dromedary) JP	1	1
Dixon, Josh (Derwent Bank)	1	1
Dixon, Miss (Skelton Castle)	1	1
Robinson, Mr G A (Bricklayer)	1	1
Anstey, James Esquire (Oatlands)	1	0
Dixon, George (Hamilton)	1	0

Appendix M: List of ships used for a comparative analysis of charges made against women

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Year</u>
1822	<i>Mary Anne</i>
1823	<i>Mary</i>
1824	<i>Brothers</i>
1825	<i>Henry</i>
1825	<i>Midas</i>
1826	<i>Providence</i>
1827	<i>Persian</i>
1827	<i>Sir Chas Forbes</i>
1827	<i>Sovereign</i>
1828	<i>Borneo</i>
1828	<i>Mermaid</i>
1829	<i>Harmony</i>
1829	<i>Lady of the Lake</i>
1841	<i>Rajah</i>

Source: TAHO CON40, Phillip Tardif, *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls, Convict Women in Van Diemen's Land 1803-1829* (North Ryde, NSW 1900); Trudy Cowley and Dianne Snowden, Biographies of the Rajah women: www.researchtasmania.com.au

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Indent for the *Sovereign*.

Indent for the *Mary Anne* (1822).

Gaol reports and papers for the *Lady of the Lake*.

ML TP D4 Reel CY1196

Gaol lists, gaol returns and ship manifest for the *Jane*.

List of children on the *Jane*.

A list of 115 Female Convicts on the *Jane*.

Gaol list and manifest for the *Platina*.

Gaol lists for the *Nautilus*.

A List of 133 Female Convicts embarked on board the Ship *Nautilus* for Van Diemen's Land.

ML TP D5 Reel CY 1197

Gaol return, ship manifest and individual gaol returns for the *Navarino*.

Gaol returns and ship manifest for the *Royal Admiral*.

ML TP Z4-9 Reel CY1241

Indent for the *Jane*.

Indent for the *Frances Charlotte*.

ML TP 11 Reel CY 1242

Indent for the *America*.

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Ship manifest for the *Sovereign*.

List of prisoners' baggage on the *Sovereign*.

List of women on the *Mermaid*.

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List of packages belonging to female convicts on the *Mermaid*.

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Indent for the *Providence*.

Appropriation list for the *Rajah*.

ML TP 23 Reel CY 1275

Appropriation list for the *Mermaid*.

Indent for the *Borneo*.

List of women who deposited money on the *Borneo*.

ML TP 24 Reel CY 1276

Indent for the *Harmony*.

Indent for the *Lady of the Lake*.

ML TP 25 Reel CY 1277

Indent for the *Eliza*.

Appropriation list for the *Providence*.

ML TP 27 Reel 1279

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